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# Dungeon®

ADVENTURES FOR TSR ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

MAY/JUNE 1991 ISSUE #29

COVER: "This book is three days overdue! What do you mean you can't pay your fine???" Introducing Mr. Abe Ishai, M.L.S. (Master of Library Scariness) in Tom Baxa's cover painting for "Ex Libris."

## Brainstorming for Goodies

Almost a year and a half ago, our publisher, Jim Ward, told me he'd like to see more "goodies" in DUNGEON® Adventures. "Let's give it more play value!" Jim said, so the entire department sat down and brainstormed ideas for ways we could make the magazine really zippy.

Some of the ideas we came up with were later judged too expensive (scratch & sniff clues to what's on the other side of that dungeon door: "Peeeyew! Must be zombies in there."). Some of our ideas sounded fine until we gave them more thought (a floppy phonograph record of sound effects to accompany the feature module: But who still has a record player?). The hologram cover, a la *National Geographic*, turned out to be too expensive (even the staff there felt it wasn't a good idea).

But one idea—not too expensive, not too silly—has finally come to fruition. Several of us remembered board games in which the room layouts changed every time the game was played. What if a group of adventurers tried exploring a dungeon in which the rooms reoriented themselves constantly? The result of this twisted line of thinking is this issue's feature module, "Ex Libris," by Randy Maxwell, complete with cardstock map tiles. Remember those plastic puzzles with the 15 sliding numbers you could never work out when you were a kid? In this puzzle, you have to work from the inside!

More good news from the publisher is that, for the present, we will not be increasing subscription rates to offset the recent postage increases. There are no guarantees that this policy won't change, but for now we're holding the line.

Your response to our request for D&D®/AD&D® game-related snapshots of real places and things has been underwhelming, but I'm not giving up. We're also slowly gathering more mini-modules for our new "Side Treks" feature, but I still haven't managed to get one to actually fit on two pages without running over a bit. More submissions for this feature are needed.

So if you have any other great brainstorms for DUNGEON Adventures "goodies," send me a note. Just remember, this is a family publication.

Barbara G. Young


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"I guess I never thought what it might be like to live in [a library]." Keith had a sudden vision of the secret door in the wall opening, and thousands of elves pouring out into the library, pulling books out of the shelves, using the slide projectors, calling up articles about leprechauns . . . , and stern little elf librarians hissing "Shhh!"

*Mythology 101,* Jody Lynn Nye

# NYMPH'S REWARD

BY JEFFERY L. FAIRBOURN

## All maidens in distress are *not* alike.

Artwork by Kevin Ward

*Jeff writes: "My wife and I are starving-but-happy students at Utah State University in Logan, Utah. I've loved fantasy since I was in the third grade, when I read* The Lord of the Rings. *I love my wife, Camille. Credit for this goes to God, Cam, Rick, Mark and Wendy, and my families.*

"Nymph's Reward" is an AD&D® 2nd Edition adventure to be played by a group of 5-7 characters of 4th to 6th level, for a total of about 30 total levels. It takes place in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® fantasy setting, in the forests southeast of Tilverton, just north of Lake Sember. The PCs are assumed to be traveling with or escorting a caravan along the road between Tilverton and Mistledale, although the DM may use some other plausible reason for the adventurers to be in this area. Some characters and organizations included are particular to the Forgotten Realms (such as the Harpers), but the adventure can be adapted into any campaign with a little work. The party should include several warriors, and it will be helpful if at least one of the PCs speaks Orcish, Ogrish, or the hill giant tongue.

The *Monstrous Compendium* entry for "Hag" should be carefully studied before running this adventure. In particular, the nature of coveys and *hag eyes* should be noted.

### For the Dungeon Master

In the forests around Lake Sember, west of the Vale of Lost Voices, a covey of hags once lived, spreading evil works throughout Mistledale, Tilverton, and Deepingdale. The covey consisted of an annis named Vexia, a greenhag named Thessinthorn, and a sea hag named Magglerak who lived in a secluded forest lake. Though the covey was responsible for much of the evil abounding in the area, the group was torn by internal strife. The three hags spent most of their time squabbling and bickering among themselves. In most of their quarrels, Vexia (the annis) would end up the victor, for she was the most powerful and cunning—or so she thought. Vexia even had the nerve to call it "her" covey, and forced her leadership on the other two.

After one of their more horrendous disagreements, Thessinthorn and Magglerak grew utterly resentful of Vexia's selfish and boastful nature, and decided

to put an end to it. They devised a plan to strip Vexia of her annis powers and expel her from the covey. They invited Houpshe, a sister greenhag of Thessinthorn, to come down from the forests of the north and replace Vexia.

Using her *change self* ability, Magglerak took the form of a handsome human male and lured Vexia into a frustrating chase. Magglerak stayed just out of reach of Vexia's talons until they reached a body of water, where the young "man" mysteriously disappeared.

After being taunted in this way several times, Vexia went to Thessinthorn and demanded that she devise a way for Vexia to capture the elusive man. Thessinthorn presented Vexia with a magical potion and instructed her to drink it when she was within sight of the man, for it would give her power to lure him to her. Vexia was so anxious to get her prey that she trusted Thessinthorn completely.

Soon thereafter, Vexia came upon Magglerak in her man guise. The annis immediately downed the potion and was changed into the form of a beautiful nymph. The man stopped and looked at her. Vexia, getting into her nymph role, invited him to sit close and speak with her. She watched with great anticipation as the man came to her; then she reached out and grabbed him with a shout of triumph.

But with a victory cry of her own, Magglerak shifted to her natural, hideous form and pulled away from Vexia's weakened grip. Shocked and furious, Vexia was threatening to punish Magglerak for her deception when Thessinthorn appeared with Houpshe. The three took Vexia to the Black Glen (where the covey would meet to do evil) and *cursed* her. In vain, Vexia tried to restore herself to annis form, but she found that Thessinthorn's potion had taken away almost all of her powers. In the Black Glen, Thessinthorn, Houpshe, and Magglerak formed their own covey and banished Vexia from their territory. They forced her to retain the form of the most disgusting thing that existed in their eyes—a nymph.

Vexia immediately tried to return to her lair, where she had the means of breaking the *curse*, but her servants didn't recognize her and tried to capture her. She barely escaped and fled to the forest's northern edge. She has been hiding there for the past six months, planning her revenge. All she needs is an opportunity to free herself from the hag sisters' magic.

If Vexia can get someone else to go into her lair and bring out a special brew she has hidden in her laboratory, she believes her powers will be restored to her. This brew is a potion, created by Thessinthorn, that increases a hag's magic resistance by 40%. The annis hopes to gain the help of some adventuring do-gooders to accomplish her plan. She will use her cunning, her knowledge of the area, and a still-functional *hag eye* that was created by the first covey and is usable by means of a cauldron in the Black Glen. She can also use her *fog cloud* ability three times per day (the only annis power she has retained) and still has her previous magic resistance.

While Vexia plotted, the success and contentment of the new covey was short lived. Both Magglerak and Thessinthorn claimed to be qualified to pick up where Vexia left off, and they began ordering Houpshe around. Houpshe didn't take that well, and the covey erupted into a fury of fits, fists, and shrieks. The fight ended with each hag leaving, vowing to get back at the others. Now, they each seek to force the others' loyalty from their separate lairs, and the covey is inactive. Nearby, Vexia's lair awaits her return.

Aubaerus the Ravenmaster, a hierophant druid of the area (see *DM's Sourcebook of the Realms,* page 18), has kept close track of these events and is pleased with the way they are working out. He has had to work hard at times to balance the evil wrought by the covey and would definitely not like to see Vexia manage to undo her *curse*. However, he believes in the natural order and progression of life in the forest and will not interfere, only warn. He will keep an eye on things during the adventure but won't approach the PCs until the end.

## Adventure Background

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> The caravan you have been traveling with moves slowly, and you are anxious to proceed west to Mistledale on your way to adventure. As another morning comes, you break camp and are moving out ahead when a small, timid voice calls to you from the trees south of the road. Cringing in obvious fear and shyness, a slim figure peeks out from behind a large oak and motions for you to come closer. No one else from the caravan sees her.

If the PCs approach the figure, the following occurs:

> The figure is a very beautiful young woman with long, flowing, green-tinged hair set with several flowers. She wears a torn gray cloak, but neither this nor the worried, fearful look on her face does much to hide her superior beauty. She looks as if she should be clad in the most elegant of fine robes, and her smile would shame the sun on a clear day in Flamerule. After watching you a moment and reassuring herself that you won't harm her, the lovely creature steps out in front of you and speaks.
>
> "Good travelers," she begins, "I am Willori, a daughter of these forests. I believe you would call me a nymph. Please forgive my boldness in calling out to you, for I am troubled. You see, one of my sisters is very ill. She was cursed by a horrible witch that lives in the forest to the south, and I fear that she may die unless the curse is broken! Forgive my fears, please, for I saw that you carried *those*," she wrinkles her nose and points at your weapons. "In truth, however, I believe that you may be my only hope in freeing my sister from her curse. And, I think that you will need to use *those* to do it. No, good sirs, I am not asking you to help me, I am begging and imploring you!" She looks as if she will either cry or run and hide. She steels herself and continues. "Oh, if you could only travel to the witch's lair and get the antidote, I would be forever in your debt!"

The PCs can talk over the situation and ask the DM questions. "Willori" will wait, hope brimming in her eyes, for the PCs' response. If asked why viewing her does not cause blindness, as is typical with nymphs, Willori says that she can will herself to be seen without harming those who see her—so long as the viewers are respectful and kind. If the PCs seem reluctant to help,

she offers them a silver brooch set with a blue gemstone (the *hag eye)* and says that she has more items like this that she will give the PCs if they succeed. She claims that the brooch will bring good luck (it has a magical aura).

**Vexia/Willori** (annis/nymph): INT very; AL CE (CN with evil tendencies); AC 0 (9); MV 15 (12); HD 7+7; hp 53; THAC0 9 (12); #AT 3 (nil); Dmg 9-16/ 9-16/3-9 (nil); SA grapple, *change self* and *fog cloud* at eighth level of ability (in nymph form, *fog cloud* three times per day only); SD 60′ infravision, surprised only on 1 on 1d10, edged weapons cause 1 less hp damage, blunt weapons add 1 hp damage; MR 20% (20%); SZ L (M); ML 15; XP 6,000; MC (Hag); statistics for Willori, Vexia's nymph form imposed by the permanent *polymorph*-like potion, are given in parentheses. See the following sections for further role-playing details.

Assuming that the PCs take the bait, the following happens:

> Willori is obviously delighted that you have agreed to help her. She continues, "My sister, Butternut, is a beneficial daughter of the forest. She is very friendly and helpful. The witch, Vexia, knows of her goodness and hates her for it.
>
> "One day, my sister found the witch wounded and near death. Vexia appeared so pitiable that my sister felt sorry for her and wanted to help. The witch said she needed an elixir that she had in her pouch, but that she was too weak to get it. Butternut kindly removed it for her, uncorked the bottle, and handed it to the witch.
>
> "Vexia was about to drink it when she said she wasn't sure if it was the right one, and that if she drank the wrong one it would kill her. She said that the one that she needed tasted like fresh honey and asked Butternut to taste it for her. She promised my sister that it would do her no harm.
>
> "Butternut tasted the potion and fell to the ground, too weak to stand. The foul witch had only pretended to need help, and she cackled her hag's gleeful laugh at having duped my sister. She cursed my sister and left her to die.
>
> "That is where we found her. Since then, the color has drained from her face. She grows uglier and uglier each day, turning into a terrible creature, and nothing I do seems to help! I fear she won't last much longer. That is why I must be so bold in confronting you. If you could just bring me the potions that the witch had in her pouch, I am sure we can find a remedy for the curse."

Willori refuses to lead the PCs to Butternut, as "Butternut wishes no one to see her suffering." If any spells are used upon her, remember her 20% magic resistance. If the PCs can detect for enemies or harmful intentions, they'll get only a slight reading, as the "nymph" is too consumed with her need to get the potion to think much about harming the PCs right now. Her story has a few shreds of truth to it, stretched as it is. Accusations of lying, if such is detected by magic, lead Willori to burst into tears and cry, "Everything is so complicated! For the love of my sister, please believe me and help me!"

If a *know alignment* spell is cast on

Willori, her alignment is chaotic neutral with evil tendencies. If confronted about her alignment, she appears ashamed and mumbles that she is very upset about things, and that lately she has found herself thinking thoughts not wholesome for a nymph—thoughts about revenge. (In truth, the change to nymph form has started to alter Vexia's evil alignment, which shocks and upsets her, and her distaste for weapons is becoming quite real—again, much to her horror. This situation cannot continue!)

Finally, an *ESP* or *true seeing* spell will reveal Willori to be exactly who she is. The DM should be prepared to ad lib in this event, having Willori perhaps concoct a tale that she was permanently changed into nymph form by a good wizard and is now trying to make up for her past sins (she casts *fog cloud* and flees if this tale fails).

The nymph hastily adds:

> "The witch has a lair of caves that lie in the deeper forest south of here. She has many minions and servants in this land that watch for intruders, so you will have to travel quickly and quietly. Avoid the open spaces, for her servants watch those, too. When you reach the deep forest, you will find the Shroud Path. It is a dark and evil trail that leads into the lairs of the witch and her loathsome sisters. You will know it when you find it. Follow the Shroud Path until you come to the Black Glen, a large clearing with a big pot in it. I will meet you there."
>
> Willori hands you the silver brooch and disappears into the trees.

A ranger may try to track Willori, but with a −4 penalty (she knows these woods well). She will travel swiftly southward to the hags' forest.

## The Forest

The witches are not the only denizens of the forest, but the areas around their lairs are avoided by almost all good creatures of the woodlands. The hags have staked claims on the territory and marked their boundaries well. Their evil influence has warped and corroded the lands about them. Therefore, as the PCs venture deeper into the forest, they will become aware that the atmosphere and character of their surroundings is growing steadily more twisted and evil.

In the heavy woods, the trees and branches seem to bar the PCs' progress, and movement through them is halved. Vision and infravision are limited to 30'. Once the PCs find the Shroud Path (area C), the terrain changes.

Check for random encounters every four hours by rolling 1d10. A roll of 1 indicates that an encounter occurs; consult the sidebar to determine what is encountered.

## Wilderness Encounter Areas

**A. The Harpers.** This encounter can take place anywhere along the southern fringe of the smaller portion of normal woods (nearest to the road). If the PCs travel across the open terrain, it occurs halfway between the road and the deeper woods to the south.

> Three figures on horseback ride into view ahead of you, hailing as they approach. They wear long green cloaks, the hoods low over their faces. The first rider, apparently the leader, motions the others to a halt with a raised hand. He is a tall, bronze-skinned Dalesman, and you can see chain mail under his tunic. Bows, knives, and other weapons sprout from beneath the clothing and harnesses of all three.

### Normal Forest Random Encounters

Roll 2d6

2. **Weretiger:** INT average; AL N; AC 3; MV 12; HD 6+2; hp 27; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-12; SA rake for 2-5/2-5, lycanthropy; SD hit only by silver or magical weapons; SZ M; ML 13; XP 975; MC (Lycanthrope); and **Wild tiger:** INT semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5+5; hp 26; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 2-5/2-5/1-10; SA rear claws for 2-8 hp each; SD +2 surprise; SZ L; ML 9; XP 650; MC (Cats, great). This pair of felines is out hunting for food. If they are reduced to half their total hit points, they flee to look elsewhere.
3. **Belabra:** INT low; AL N; AC −2 (head)/6 (tentacles); MV 3, fly 6 (E); HD 4+4; hp 24; THAC0 15; #AT 1 entangle or 1 ram; Dmg 2-8 (ram only); SA bite, barbed tentacles; SD blood spray; SZ M; ML 15; XP 975; MC. This monster is a newcomer to the area and is out inspecting its new hunting grounds.
4-5. **Giant badgers** (2): INT semi; AL N; AC 4; MV 6, burrow 3; HD 3; hp 14, 12; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SZ M; ML 8; XP 65; MC. The PCs inadvertently disturb the creatures' burrow.
6-7. **Goblins** (10): INT low; AL LE; AC 6; MV 6; HD 1−1; hp 5 (×2), 4 (×3), 3 (×5); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword); SZ S; ML 10; XP 15; MC. These goblins are part of a larger group that is being tracked by the Harpers (see area A).
8. **Gnomes** (8): INT very; AL NG; AC 5; MV 6; HD 1; hp 6 (×3), 5 (×5); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword or crossbow); SZ S; ML 12; MC. These gnomes are a mining survey mission sent into the forest in search of a new quarry.
9. **Centaurs** (4): INT average; AL N; AC 5; MV 18; HD 4; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-8 (two hooves and morning star); SZ L; ML 13; MC (Centaur, sylvan). Due to the growing power of the hags in the deeper woods, these centaurs have been forced into the fringes. They are not happy with their current state nor with interlopers that pass through their new territory.
10. **Ravens** (4): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 1, fly 36; HD ½; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA 10% chance of striking eye; SD not surprised in daytime; SZ S; ML 8; XP 65; MM2/105. These birds are agents of the druid Aubaerus. The PCs will notice the ravens sitting in the tree branches, cawing obnoxiously as the party passes.
11. **Harpers:** AL NG; AC 6; MV 9; R2; hp 13 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg by weapon type; ML 14; studded leather armor, shield, long sword, long bow, 24 sheaf arrows, dagger. These Harpers are part of Rinthal's following (see area A) and are tracking the troop of goblins mentioned previously.
12. **Dryad:** INT high; AL N; AC 9; MV 12; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA *charm person, dimension door, speak with plants;* SZ M; ML 12; MC; knife. The dryad Aspinia was speaking with the flowers that grow near her oak tree when she sensed the approach of outsiders. She will try to separate and *charm* any male PC with a charisma of 16 or more. Otherwise, she will watch the party pass and flee if discovered.

The first man smiles and says, in a clear voice, "Well met, good travelers. I am Rinthal of Deepingdale. These are my traveling companions, Freaton and Sudeio." A short-bearded, slim man and a lyre-carrying half-elf nod their greetings to you.

Rinthal waits patiently but expectantly for the PCs to introduce themselves. The three have been trailing a group of goblins from the woods of Mistledale and have ridden this far with little rest. Rinthal is a good judge of character and will watch for any suspicious-looking PCs.

**Heavy Forest Random Encounters**
Roll 2d6

2. **Merrow** (2): INT average; AL CE; AC 4; MV 6, swim 12; HD 4+4; hp 26, 24; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-8; SA surprise bonus; SD *camouflage;* SZ L; ML 12; XP 270; MC (Ogre). These two have strayed from Magglerak's lake (area G) and are hungry and scared. They will attack on sight.
3. **Pixies** (5): INT exceptional; AL N; AC 5; MV 6, fly 12 (B); HD ½; hp 3 each; THAC0 20 (16); #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (dagger) or 2-5 (war arrow); SA *sleep* and *forget* arrows, *invisibility, polymorph self, illusion, confusion, dispel magic, dancing lights, ESP;* MR 25%; SZ S; ML 11; MC. These mischievous faeries are taking advantage of the spooky forest to play a prank on the easily frightened humans that pass through. The pixies have placed *illusions* of magical items in the branches above the PC's heads. There will be one appropriate-looking magical item for each PC (a glowing suit of armor for a fighter, a wand for a mage, etc.). When the PCs try to get them, the items crawl away, further up the tree. The pixies try to get the PCs out on a limb that will then break, dropping the adventurers to the ground for 1-6 hp damage. When this happens, the pixies laugh and giggle. If anyone laughs with them, they may (30% chance) give that person a randomly determined potion. If attacked, the pixies will not hesitate to use their *sleep* arrows. Once the PCs are asleep, they take the party's handheld weapons, deposit them in a hollow tree one mile away, and lure some wandering monster to the scene (roll again on this table, ignoring a result of 3). The monster arrives at the same time as the PCs.
4. **Mongrelmen** (6): INT low; AL LN; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3; hp 15 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA pick pocket (70% chance); SD camouflage, mimicry; SZ M; ML 12; XP 120; MC. These misfits are out on Houpshe's errand, gathering ingredients for another of their mistress's potions. They will attempt to pick-pocket a mage's spell components and will fight if caught.

5-6. **Centaur skeletons** (4): INT non; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 4; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-3/1-3; SD edged weapons do half damage; immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* and *fear;* SZ L; ML special; XP 270; MC (variant). These skeletal centaurs attack until destroyed and never check morale. These are Vexia's minions and will attack anyone on sight.

7-9. **Shroud Path** (see area C).

10. **Bugbears** (4): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3+1; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 or by weapon type; SA surprise, +2 to damage; SZ L; ML 12; XP 120; MC; battle axe. These four bugbears are servants of Thessinthorn. They are searching for wanderers to rough up and take back to their mistress's tree house (area F). The bugbears attack anyone on sight.
11. **Ogres** (3): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 28 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10 or by weapon type; SA +2 to damage; SZ L; ML 12; XP 175; MC; halberd. This trio is on a raiding tour and will attack the PCs immediately. Once they have lost half their hit points, however, they will try to escape.
12. **Ettercap:** INT low; AL NE; AC 6; MV 12; HD 5; hp 32; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-8; SA poison (save or die in 1-4 rounds); SD traps; SZ M; ML 13; XP 975; MC. Some or all of the PCs become caught in a trap set by this deadly menace. From 1-3 of the PCs set off web snares that hold them fast (as a *web* spell) unless they save vs. paralyzation. The ettercap emerges from the underbrush and attacks anyone in the traps before trying to lure free party members into other snares.

The Harpers will not reveal their identity, other than what they have already given. They question the PCs to get an idea of their destination and general purpose for being in the area. The Harpers ask the party if they have seen any sign of goblins in the woods and inquire for details (how many, which direction they came from, etc.). They know little about the hags' covey to the south but do know that one of their friends, a woodsman named Jerro Hamen, disappeared in the area a while back. The Harpers can tell the party that strange things happen in the deeper woods to the south, probably due to a group of bickering hags that occupy the area.

Unless attacked (a foolish move), the Harpers converse with the PCs briefly, then continue on their way. If the PCs reveal their mission to the Harpers, Freaton (a druid) will remember them and inform the Ravenmaster of the party's mission. For more information on the Harpers, see *Cyclopedia of the Realms,* page 49.

If attacked, Rinthal and Sudeio fight fiercely and to the death. Freaton *shape changes* into the form of a hawk and flies swiftly to alert Harper allies. The PCs will soon be outlaws in the Dalelands and elven forests. Within 4-6 weeks, eight Harper rangers (with statistics equal to Rinthal's), together with Freaton, arrive to take them to Deepingdale (by force, if necessary) where the authorities there will deal with them.

**Rinthal:** AL LG; AC 2; MV 9; R8; hp 57; THAC0 13; #AT 3/2 or 2; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/30, D 16, C 14, I 10, W 15, Ch 14; ML 15; spell: *entangle; bastard sword +2, ring of protection +1,* chain mail, long bow, 24 sheaf arrows.

**Freaton:** AL N; AC 5 (5); MV 12 (fly 36); D7; hp 38; THAC0 16; #AT 1 (3); Dmg by spell or weapon type (1/1/1-2); S 9, D 15, C 14, I 11, W 15, Ch 15; ML 13; Spells: *animal friendship, bless, cure light wounds* (×2), *detect evil, charm person, heat metal, slow poison, warp wood, call lightning, protection from fire, sticks to snakes; leather armor +2, spear +2,* dagger, sling. Freaton's hawk-form statistics are in parentheses.

**Sudeio:** AL NG; AC 2; MV 12; B7; hp 29; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; SA singing; S 13, D 16, C 11, I 15, W 11, Ch 16; ML 12; *short sword +2, bracers of defense AC 4,*

*dagger +3*, long bow, 24 flight arrows. Sudeio can cast the following spells: *charm person, dancing lights, shield, continual light, locate object, suggestion.*

**B. The Ravens.** This encounter takes place when the PCs are about to enter the southern forest (anywhere on the edge of the normal woods).

> You are about to enter the southern forest when you hear the faint sound of some squawking bird. Looking up, you see several large, black, low-flying birds turn and race toward you from the west.

These are Aubaerus's ravens. The druid is aware of the PCs' travels and wants to investigate further. The ravens, unless stopped, fly down and try to frighten the party's horses. Aubaerus would like the adventurers to leave his woods alone, so he has commanded his ravens to cause a horse to become skittish and resentful of the forest.

The DM should roll 1d12 for each animal (including pack animals); on a result of 6 or higher, the mount fights against its rider to stay out of the forest. On a roll of 10 or higher, the mount bolts in a random direction away from the woods' edge. Riders may be thrown (save vs. paralyzation or be thrown off), taking 1-3 hp damage. A bolting horse flees for six turns before slowing. Apply a −4 modifier to the roll for war horses.

If the PCs make haste, they should be able to reach the forest before the ravens are upon them. Once the party is under the cover of the trees, the ravens will not follow. If the PCs attack the ravens in any way, two of the birds return to inform Aubaerus while the rest attempt to frighten the horses. If anyone tries to magically speak with the ravens, the creatures only babble things like, "The Master doesn't want you here!" "Go away!" "Leave this place!" "Stay out of the forest!" etc.

**Ravens** (6): INT animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 1, fly 36; HD ½; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA 10% chance of striking eye; SD not surprised in daytime; SZ S; ML 8; XP 65; MM2/105.

**C. The Shroud Path.** The PCs may come across the Shroud Path through a random encounter roll or by crossing the boundaries of the hags' territories on the wilderness map.

> Opening up before you is a trail of some kind, 5′ wide. The trees and brambles to either side of the path bend and curve upward to form an arch and block out direct sunlight. The path is a dark tunnel through a wall of leaves, roots, and briars.
>
> Standing along the center of the path, spaced at irregular intervals as far as you can see, are 6′-tall stakes. On each stake is suspended an assortment of skulls and bones; some appear to be human, some don't. These are decorated with colored dyes, feathers, and tattered strips of cloth that sway in the light breeze. You notice small red points of light in the eye sockets of the skulls.

The Shroud Path is a series of magical and illusory trails that wind throughout the area controlled by the hags. On the Wilderness map it is marked by the dotted line, and anyone traveling across the line will encounter the path. It marks the territories that the hags have established, dividing their land among themselves. Someone who knows the path well can reach any of the hag's lairs or the Black Glen within a few minutes. Anyone not familiar with it will wander aimlessly until he happens upon one of the encounters (see "Shroud Path Encounters").

Upon encountering the Shroud Path, each PC must make a saving throw vs. spells. Anyone failing the save reacts as if he were under the effects of a *cause fear* spell, screaming and turning to run into the forest for 1-4 rounds unless restrained. Screaming characters have a 25% chance of drawing another creature (or creatures) to the scene (consult the "Heavy Forest Random Encounters" table). The creature arrives in one turn and will not advance onto the path. It will, however, deal with all characters not on the path. A paladin or cleric of good alignment who makes his saving throw can counter the fear for the whole party by boldly presenting his holy symbol and rolling successfully as if to turn a shadow.

The stakes and bone talismans stretch along the entire length of the path, but once a PC has saved against the fear, he is immune to their effects.

While on the path, the PCs are unaware of what direction they are traveling. They cannot control the timing of their arrival at the Black Glen or any other possible destination. Movement is for normal terrain, and visual capabilities are normal. The DM need not check for random encounters for normal or heavy forest while the PCs are on the Shroud Path.

The strange skulls and bones are evil talismans that the hags placed on the path for two reasons: First, they keep out most of the prying eyes of would-be enemies. Second, they *cause fear* in even the hags' servants, so that Magglerak's minions stay in her area, Thessinthorn's in hers, etc.

The red lights in the eye sockets are fireflies. Shaking or rattling the talismans will dislodge and reveal them.

The DM should check once each hour for an encounter or destination (one chance in six). When an encounter occurs, roll 2d10 and consult the Shroud Path Encounters sidebar.

**D. The Black Glen.**

> The narrow path opens up before you to become a large clearing in the midst of the thick forest. On all sides of the circular clearing, paths covered by arching tree limbs lead deeper into the forest. A strange charcoal-colored haze fills the air above the glen, blocking out the sunlight. Your attention is drawn to a large black iron cauldron in the center of the clearing. It is 5′ tall and 5′ wide at the mouth. The dirt and turf of the area is mossy, dark, and strewn with small piles of bones.

The glen has been abandoned for over five months, and the minions of the various hags avoid it. The bones are human, demihuman, and humanoid. The cauldron is empty save for a small amount of bluish slime in the bottom. This slime is magical and was formerly used by the hags to see through their *hag eyes*. Lying behind the cauldron (where the PCs cannot see it at first, no matter what direction they enter the clearing) is a 10′-long pole made of black wood. The hags used it to stir their concoctions in the cauldron. There is nothing of value in the Black Glen.

When the PC have explored the glen for one turn, Vexia/Willori steps from the shadows of the trees into the lighter shadows of the glen.

The nymph appears. She smiles excitedly and says, "Oh, good sirs! I praise the good powers of the forest that you have made it this far. I have been with my sister and those who attend her, and I have told them of your bravery. We have hope!"

She turns and points to one of the trails that winds into the dark forest.

"This path will take you directly to Vexia's lair. Be swift and courageous. Carry the stone of luck before you! When you arrive at the lair—a cave at the base of a large hill—be careful to enter by giving the passwords." She looks around and pulls you in close to whisper. "You must speak the words, 'Vexia's Wrath' as you enter, or quick death will befall you! Once inside, seek out the laboratory to find the creature's potions. Bring back to me, here, one that is contained in a red clay jug. Now, fare you well!"

The nymph slips into the forest, leaving you staring at the Shroud Path that will take you to Vexia's lair.

The results of casting spells on the nymph are the same here as before. If the PCs follow the path that the nymph indicates, they will soon arrive at area H. Once the PCs proceed down the path, Vexia/Willori returns to the glen and takes up the stirring staff. She uses it to froth up the slime in the cauldron,

**Shroud Path Encounters**
(Roll 2d10)

2: **Merrow** (1-2): Statistics as in forest random encounter charts.
3: **Mongrelmen** (3-8): Statistics as in forest random encounter charts.
4: **Bugbears** (3-6): Statistics as in forest random encounter charts.
5-6: **Centaur Skeletons** (2-8): Statistics as in forest random encounter charts.
7-10: **The Black Glen:** See area D.
11-12: **Ravens** (1-3): Statistics as in forest random encounter charts. These ravens simply pass by and observe the party, then fly away to report to Aubaerus.
13-15: **Vexia's Lair:** See area H.
16: **Houpshe's Cave:** See area E.
17: **Thessinthorn's Tree House:** See area F.
18: **Magglerak's Lake:** See area G.
19-20: No encounter.

through which she can use the *hag eye* to follow the PCs' progress. (If the PCs took the staff, Vexia/Willori will find a suitable stick after cursing the PCs roundly.) Thessinthorn and Magglerak are not aware that the *hag eye* still exists, so they will not be alerted to Vexia's ploy.

**E. Houpshe's Cave.**

Ahead of you, the terrain climbs and becomes a rocky hill. A large clearing, the grass and weeds cut and trimmed short, forms a yard that leads up to a cave opening in the hillside. Barking voices come from the cave mouth, and from this distance—100′ away—you can see several short, squat humanoids pushing each other around and arguing. Suddenly, a shrieking woman's voice sounds across the clearing, and the humanoids cower and scatter. A trail of smoke curls from the cave entrance into the overcast sky.

The cave mouth is 100′ wide, 60′ high, and leads into the home of Houpshe, a greenhag. Houpshe's natural form is incredibly gruesome, with orange eyes, pale green barklike skin, and long, wiry black hair. She normally dresses her plump, 5′-tall figure in gray rags. Her favorite tactic is to take the form of a lost pilgrim and for directions to the home of some unknown sage. The humanoids are her mongrelmen servants.

**Houpshe** (greenhag): INT very; AL NE; AC −2; MV 12, swim 12; HD 9; hp 58; THAC0 9 (12); #AT 2; Dmg 7-8/7-8; SA spells at 9th level of ability, mimicry, surprise (modifier of −5); SD surprised only on a 1; SZ M; ML 17; XP 6,000; MC (Hag). At will, once per round, she can cast *audible glamer, dancing lights, invisibility, pass without trace, change self, speak with monsters, water breathing, weakness.*

**Mongrelmen** (10): INT low; AL LN; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4 (×2), 3 (×3), 2 (×5); hp 20, 18, 15, 13, 11, 9, 8, 7 (×3); THAC0 17 (×5), 19 (×5); #AT 1; Dmg 1-10 (×2), 1-8 (×3), 1-6 (×5); SD camouflage, mimicry; SZ M; ML 12; XP 4 HD: 175, 3 HD: 120, 2 HD: 65; MC.

Houpshe can hear anyone approaching within 60′ of the cave entrance and will lie as if unconscious, in pilgrim guise, near the opening. She orders her mongrelmen to scatter into the forest when the PCs enter her clearing. This is part of her ambush plan, for the mongrelmen will all return within one turn, and Houpshe will take her natural form and attack the outsiders in the cavern.

The cavern extends 120′ into the hill and gradually slopes downward. At the back are Houpshe's quarters, where she has her own cauldron and a crude laboratory. Though formidable, she is the least established of the hags and is contemplating returning to her old home in the forests around Daggerdale.

The smoke comes from the mongrelmen's campfire some 40′ into the cave. Beyond this point, all is in *continual darkness* (as the third-level priest spell), so that even infravision is useless unless the PCs enter (the spell was cast by a clerical victim of the covey). Then, visual range is 10′ with a torch or 15′ with infravision. Houpshe can use this *darkness* (cast at the 9th level of magic) and her magic abilities to lead the PCs on a merry chase through the cave, picking them off one at a time from behind. Her mongrelmen have memorized the layout of the cave and can move stealthily through it (MV 6), while the PCs will be unable to move faster than MV 3 without continually tripping and stumbling over the rocks, debris, and bodies that litter the cave.

This information is given to the DM to expand on this adventure. It is probably a good idea to save Houpshe (and Thessinthorn and Magglerak in areas F and G, respectively) for further adventuring. In order to have the PCs avoid this encounter, the DM can have Vexia/Willori appear to the PCs from the side of the clearing and warn them that this is the wrong cave; another witch lives inside it. Vexia wouldn't discourage the PCs from coming back later to kill the greenhag, but she would want to save the adventurers for herself, once she gets her antidote. Houpshe's treasure (types F and X) is left up to the DM.

**F. Thessinthorn's Tree House.**

Ahead of you, suspended 40′ above ground in a cluster of massive trees, is a giant wooden structure. It is made of a collection of log walls and floors at various angles, with roofs of thatched sticks and leaves covered with tar. The whole of it is draped in long ivy and moss. What few windows or openings you see are hidden by shadow. From here and there you

hear the creaking of doors and footsteps, and you catch a glimpse of a large furry face that peers out of a small side opening and vanishes back inside. The structure is built on at least four 8'-diameter ash trees and several other thin ones. Cut into the sides of one of the large ash trees are wooden steps that lead up to an open trapdoor.

This is the stick mansion of Thessinthorn, the greenhag. Of all the hags in this forest, Thessinthorn is the oldest and most established. Her tree house has stood for hundreds of years, concealed from elves, druids, human explorers, and even good dragons and adventurers. She has repulsed attacks from the Harpers and has used her powers and the powers of the hag covey to cause problems and turmoil for the Harpers in other lands. Thessinthorn is devious, calculating, and patient, unlike Vexia. Her natural form is not as hideous as Houpshe's (though she is still quite ugly), and she spends most of the time *shape changed* into either a large, bugbear-type humanoid or an old-but-beautiful elf maiden. Whatever form she takes, she wears tattered black and green robes, and she always carries one or two potions (*gaseous form* and *flying)* in her side pouch for safety measures.

**Thessinthorn** (greenhag): hp 55; same statistics as for Houpshe, area E.

Thessinthorn's stick mansion is accessible through the open trapdoor on the bottom, by flying to one of the windows or cracks, or by *dimension door* spell. However, only through flying to an unguarded opening can an intruder hope to get inside unnoticed. "Thess" has laid magicks on the very walls and on the moss that grows upon them. The tree house cannot be burned down because Thess has a terrible fear of fire and has taken magical and alchemical precautions against that danger. Should anyone use a *dimension door* spell to get inside, several *magic mouths* begin to shout an alarm and alert Thess's minions, who arrive in 1-3 rounds.

Thessinthorn has acquired 15 bugbears as servants. She keeps the inside of the tree house dark and cold enough for them to live comfortably. For personal guards, she has three verbeeg. Her minions are posted throughout her mansion as a watch, taking shifts on patrol. Chances of entering the place unnoticed are as normal chances for surprise against bugbears.

Thessinthorn rarely leaves her home, preferring to use her bugbears to do her dirty work. However, when they do bring back captured victims, she is as cruel and malicious as any of her hag sisters. Thess currently has several humans, elves, and mongrelmen in captivity.

**Bugbear leader:** INT average; AL CE; AC 4; MV 9; HD 4; hp 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +3; SA surprise modifier −3; SZ L; ML 13; XP 175; MC; morning star.

**Bugbears** (14): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3+1; hp 20 (×2), 17 (×3), 15 (×4), 14 (×5); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +2; SA surprise modifier −3; SZ L; ML 13; XP 120; MC; hand axe.

**Verbeeg** (3): INT average; AL NE; AC 4; MV 18; HD 5+5; hp 32, 31, 28; THAC0 15; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type +5; SZ L; ML 13; XP 270; MC (Giantkin); club.

Thessinthorn's tree house is a bizarre, twisting series of rooms with no determinable halls or pattern whatsoever. Intruders wandering in it will become lost as if in a *maze* spell unless precautions are taken, such as marking progress on the walls or using rope. Her central laboratory is immense, and she has created and collected several potions that she will not hesitate to use.

As with Houpshe's cave (area E), this information is given so that the DM and PCs can continue their adventuring in the hags' forest. All treasure is left to the DM's discretion. Before the PCs have had a chance to deal with Vexia/Willori and are more powerful, they'd best not mess with Thess.

**G. Magglerak's Lake.**

Before you stretches a calm forest lake, its green waters overgrown with reeds and algae. At its north end, a forest stream tumbles over a natural stone wall and falls into the lake's water, sending ripples out to the central depths. On the east side of the lake, the stream travels back through the wall of trees into the deep forest.

Hidden by the northern waterfall is a large crevice in the rock that winds underground to a series of water-filled burrows beneath the lake. These gloomy halls are the lair of Magglerak, the sea hag. After Vexia, she is the most arrogant of the hag sisters and is by far the most horrid appearing. Of late, she does not travel outside of her lair, though she has snatched a few victims on the edge of her lake and pulled them down to a watery doom.

Magglerak has very little contact with the world beyond her lake and is continually plotting and scheming to reunite the new covey beneath her rule. Her burrows are inhabited by 10 merrow that will not exit the lake water to fight the party unless the PCs appear weak. Also in the lake are three giant water spiders and Magglerak's collection of prisoners: three nixies and a human female warrior. The nixies are kept in crude iron cages, while the woman is held in an underground air pocket accessible only by swimming underwater for four minutes.

**Magglerak** (sea hag): INT average; AL CE; AC 7; MV swim 15; HD 3; hp 20; THAC0 13 (16); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +6; SA *death gaze, fearsome aspect, change self;* SZ M; ML 11; XP 975; MC (Hag); dagger.

**Merrow** (10): INT average; AL CE; AC 4; MV 6, swim 12; HD 4+4; hp 27, 25 (×2), 24 (×3), 22 (×4); THAC0 15; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-8 or by weapon type; SA surprise modifier of −5; SD 70% invisible; SZ L; ML 11; XP 270; MC (Ogre).

**Giant water spiders** (3): INT semi; AL N; AC 5; MV swim 15; HD 3+3; hp 15 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA poison (save or die); SZ M; ML 12; XP 420; MC (Spider).

**Nixies** (3): INT very; AL N; AC 7; MV 6, Swim 12; HD ½; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA *charm;* MR 25%; SZ S; ML 8; MC.

**Justeen** (human captive): AL CG; AC 10; MV 12; F2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (unarmed); statistics unremarkable; ML 13.

The PCs can see the footprints of several large, web-footed humanoids around the edge of the lake, but nothing will happen to them unless they enter the lake water.

As with Houpshe and Thessinthorn, Magglerak's lair may be too tough for the party to handle at this point. Likewise, treasure is left to the DM. If they arrive here and are about to enter the water without first dealing with Vexia/Willori, the DM should have the nymph/hag appear and warn them to turn back.

**H. Vexia's Lair.** If the PCs know where they are going (i.e., if they are not using the Shroud Path Encounters system), it will take them 12 turns to reach this hill from the Black Glen. Unless they stray from the Shroud Path, they will have no encounters during this time.

The annis's lair was originally created by an underground stream that surfaced at the base of the hill to form a pool. From this pool, the brook ran miles through the forest, joining other streams until it ended up in Magglerak's lake. The water source dried up long ago, and various creatures have used the empty tunnels for burrows.

Then Vexia arrived and ordered her orc and ogre servants to carve out a fitting home from the dirt-filled caves. From the outside, all that is visible of the lair is a rocky depression at the base of a hill. At the bottom of the depression, against the hillside, is the cavern entrance (area H1).

Inside, the caves are carved through some areas of solid rock, sediment, and tree roots. The walls and ceilings are held together by brick, wooden beams, and mud-cement packing. Unless otherwise noted, ceilings are 15'-20' high. The floors are uneven and covered with soft-packed dirt. Those areas used by Vexia's humanoid servants are littered with food scraps and dung. Except where noted, all areas in the caves are dark and cool, and infravision will function normally.

This environment is home to many small creatures (ants, mice, snakes, etc.) that have learned to avoid the cave's owners. It is also the den of several larger creatures that Vexia has used as guards or pets—or food for both. The PCs hear scuttling, crawling noises as they proceed through the caves, and small shapes scramble out of their path continually. Rocks and dirt are dislodged from the walls whenever anyone passes too closely. While these sounds may unnerve the PCs, it will also give them a bonus on surprising the guards, who are used to noises and won't be alert to the characters' movements.

Due to Vexia's six-month absence, the orcs, ogres, and giant who serve her have neglected their posts; they are living off the stores in her cellar and gallivanting around the area. When the PCs encounter them, the monsters have a +4 bonus to be surprised. The monsters' careless talking and carousing will give the PCs a +1 bonus to avoid surprise.

All doors in the lair are made of split oaken logs bound together with iron strips and coated with some kind of sticky, resilient pitch. Door latches and levers are iron and were made by dwarves before Vexia's crew stole them long ago.

**Level One**

**H1. Cave Entrance.**

> The Shroud Path abruptly ends, leaving you at the foot of a large hill in the gnarled woods. You can see patches of blue sky through breaks in the trees and clouds. Before you, the ground drops into a small depression—what must have been a natural pool at one time—before climbing steeply up the hillside. At the bottom of the pool is a cave, its opening covered by the roots of an old, twisted tree. The entrance appears to be about 20' high and 10' wide, although it concealed by the warped, fibrous roots of the trees growing on the hill above. Spaces between the roots look just large enough for a small person to squeeze through.

The tree roots are Vexia's doorman, activated by a spell she was able to develop (though she promptly lost it a week later). Anyone attempting to enter the cave without first uttering the passwords "Vexia's Wrath" will find 1-4 roots constrict about his person for 1-4 hp damage each per round (THAC0 16). A successful save vs. paralyzation allows the character to slip back outside, but this is possible only on the first round that he attempts to enter the cave and is grabbed by the roots. Each root is AC 6 and has 8 hp. If the PCs attempt to chop off the roots, 1-3 more emerge from the dirt to replace each one that is lost. The use of fire, magical or not, will clear the entrance and kill the tree if all the roots present are slain.

**H2. The Bat Cave.** If the PCs enter the lair at night, all of the bats that nest here will be outside in the forest and there will be no encounter. During the day, however, any torches or loud noises within 20' of the small side cave will cause a horde of 85 bats to swarm about for 2-8 rounds. The bats' frenzy may extinguish the torches (1-in-6 chance per round), and each PC will take 1-2 hp damage before the bats settle down again. Infravision is useless during a bat swarm, and the adventurers will be left to make their way blindly down the corridor.

The door to area 3 has a huge iron latch without a lock. The latch squeaks horribly when turned but will not alert any of the lair's denizens except those in room 3.

**Bats** (85): INT animal; AL N; AC 8 (special); MV 1, fly 24 (B); HD ¼; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA swarm; SZ T; ML 3; XP 15; MC.

**H3. Reception Chamber.**

> The huge door swings into a dusty, torchlit room with solid stone walls. Torch brackets are set in the wall every 10', but only one holds a burning torch. On the west side of the room, semicircular stairs lead up to a 30'-wide dais. In the western wall of the dais, another door is set deeply into the wall. Chiseled into the steps of the dais are runes or glyphs of some kind. Standing on the steps are six monstrosities: Skeletons that are half man and half horse act as mounts for human skeletons carrying metal shields and spears. The figures stare at you but do not move.

The centaur skeletons with their skeleton riders wait to attack until someone has started to climb the steps of the dais, whereupon they attack at +1 due to their height (on the first round only). The centaur skeletons attack with their two front hooves, while their riders use their spears like lances. These undead are protected from clerical turning by the mystical glyphs on the steps. They are turned as spectres.

**Centaur skeletons** (4): INT non; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 4; hp 20 each; THAC0 17; #AT 2; Dmg 1-3/1-3; SD edged weapons do half damage; immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* and *fear;* SZ L; ML special; XP 270; MC (variant). These monsters attack until destroyed and never check morale.

**Skeletal riders** (6): INT non; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SD edged weapons do half damage; immune to *sleep, charm, hold,* and *fear;* SZ M; ML special; XP 65; broad swords; MC. These skeletons attack until destroyed and never check morale.

The door on the dais is false. It has no lock, only an iron latch just like all the others in Vexia's lair. The door is trapped, however, so that if anyone opens it, spears are launched from both the north and south walls. The spears strike as 6-HD monsters and do 1-8 hp damage to a random target at the doorway. The trap cannot be detected or removed easily (−15% chance on both). Neither Vexia nor any of her servants ever use this door.

If the door from area 2 is closed and the inside latch is pulled upward, a 10′-square section of the north wall slides to the west, revealing a passageway that leads deeper into Vexia's lair. The skeletons and door trap can be completely avoided if the PCs discover the secret door and how to open it before trying the false door on the dais. A slight draft from the north wall carries most of the torch smoke out through area 2.

The ogres at area H9 are supposed to keep all of the torches in this room burning, but they barely manage to keep one lit. The skeletons have no treasure.

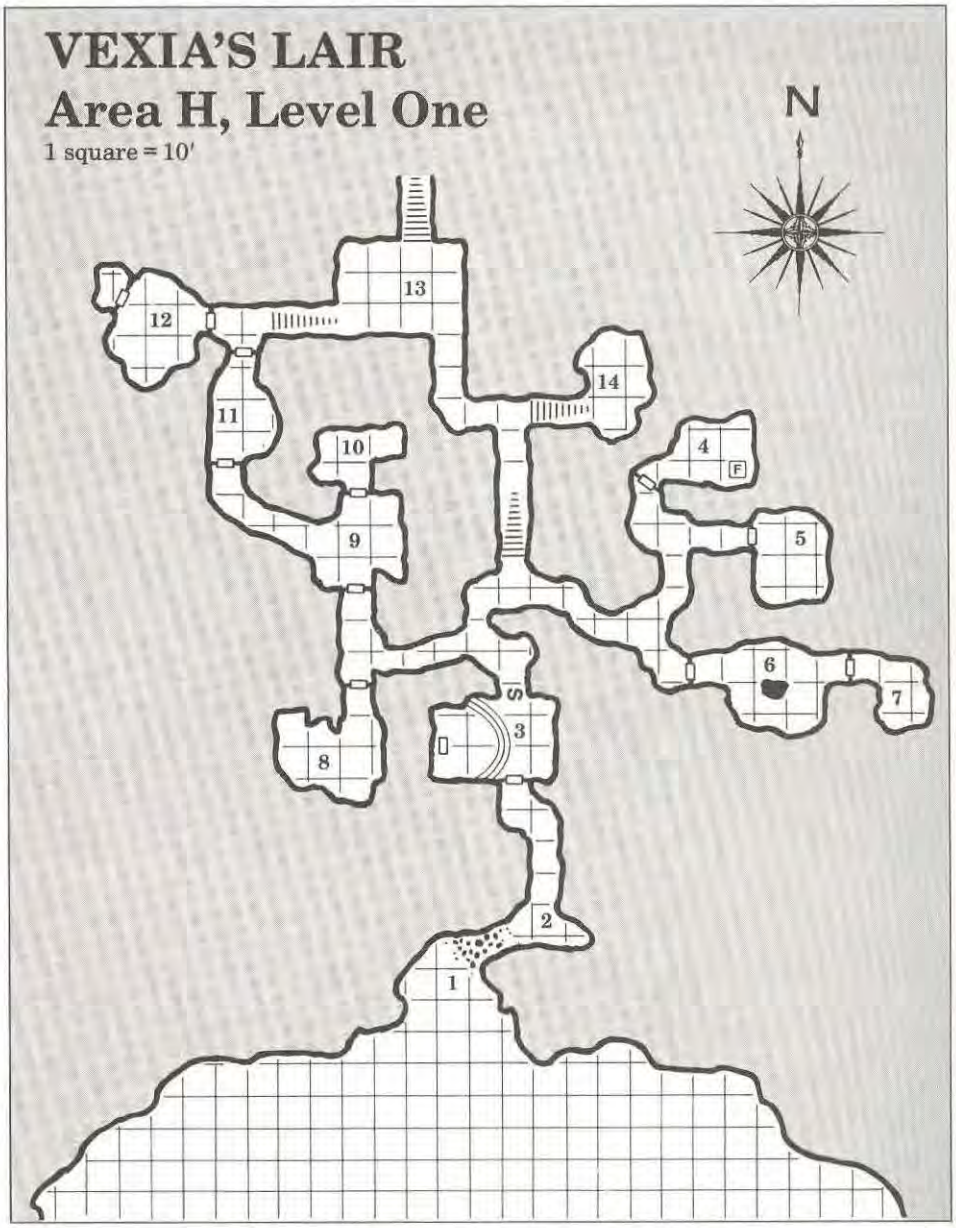
**H4. Waste Dump.** Anyone listening at the door will smell a strong, sour odor coming from whatever lies beyond.

> When the door is opened, a sickening, musty odor fills the air. Whatever lurks in the dark chamber beyond gives off a terrible stench. Piled up against the walls of the 20′ by 30′ chamber is a mass of disgusting scraps and waste material. The floor is covered with slop and dung, and a few small bones.

Though the garbage and slime in this room certainly looks menacing, it is harmless normal waste.

Against the east wall, buried under a 1′-deep mound of wet ashes and slime, lies a wooden trapdoor in the floor. It opens to reveal a 60′ drop into a small cave that Vexia uses as a trash dump. Since she has been gone, her orc and ogre servants have neglected to open the trapdoor to dispose of their waste. They have only opened the door to the room and tossed their refuse inside, hoping that it would drain down into the hole.

The room contains nothing of value. The cave at the bottom of the hole is a 10′ cube filled with 6′ of soft, disgusting slime. There are four rot grubs in the sludge that will be swift to attack anyone fishing around in their home. Anyone searching for one turn has a 30% chance of finding a soiled leather pouch containing 25 gp. This was accidentally thrown in the trash bin by an orc months ago.




**Rot grubs** (4): INT non; AL N; AC 9; MV 1; HD 1 hp; THAC0 nil; #AT nil; Dmg nil; SA burrow to host's heart in 1-3 turns; SZ T; ML 5; XP 15 each; MC.

**H5. Unfinished Chamber.**

> Upon entering this large chamber, you can see that it obviously has suffered a collapse in the past. Large wooden beams brace crumbling areas of the ceiling. The beams are held together with ropes, wire cords, and spikes. Piles of rock and dirt reach up the walls almost to the ceiling, 15′ overhead. Scattered about the room are mining tools and a large, crude wheelbarrow that is missing its wheel.

Vexia planned on expanding her lair in this direction until several of her minions were killed when this chamber

collapsed while being excavated. Since the hag has disappeared, the orcs and ogres have quit digging everywhere and thrown all of their tools into this room. If anyone is foolish enough to try to remove the wooden braces, the ceiling immediately collapses, burying everyone in the room under 3-12′ of rubble. The collapse causes 10d4 hp damage initially, and anyone buried beneath the rubble will suffocate in 1-4 rounds unless rescued. Digging out a buried person is nearly impossible, requiring a successful bend bars/lift gates roll for every 10′ the rescuers must dig to find the victim. Rescue efforts may (40% chance) cause the remaining walls to collapse, burying the room entirely. There is nothing of value in this room.

**H6. The Well.**

> The air in this chamber is very cool and damp. The walls are 15′ high and curve into an arched ceiling. In the center of the floor is a 6′-diameter hole that descends into darkness beyond your vision. Against the southern wall lies an overturned wooden bucket sealed with wax. It is almost 2′ wide at the mouth and has a metal handle to which is attached a coil of rope.

The shaft is a well that drops 80′ to an underground pool of fresh water. Items dropped down the well splash into the water below in 2½ seconds. Hiding down the well, clinging to the side about 40′ below the surface, is a shadow. This undead creature waits until the PCs are leaving before emerging from the well to pick off stragglers. It surprises anyone trying to climb down the well, attacking when the adventurer reaches the 40′ depth. At the bottom of the well, 10′ below the surface of the pool, lies the shadow's treasure (taken from lone orcs that it has killed in this room) of 45 gp and a tarnished silver ring worth 15 gp.

**Shadow:** Int low; AL CE; AC 7; MV 12; HD 3+3; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5 plus special; SA strength drain; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR special; SZ M; ML special ; XP 650; MC.

**H7. Empty Room With Air Shaft.**

> This room is dusty, but the air here is fresher than in other areas of the caves. Dim sunlight from the world above filters down through a 1′-wide shaft in the ceiling.

The shaft is used to keep a slight current of air moving through the caves, and it narrows and widens irregularly up to the surface, 70′ above. Anyone trying to climb out, even a halfling or a gnome, will not make it farther than 10′. A PC drinking a potion of *diminution* could climb the shaft in 2-5 turns and has a 50% chance of finding a small aquamarine gem worth 150 gp embedded in the loose rock of the chimney wall.

**H8. Gulshadir's Lair.** The door to this cave has hinges at its top and swings vertically to allow its occupant to enter and exit at will. When the PCs get to the door, they will be able to tell by the smell that some large animal dwells nearby. "Gulshadir" is scrawled on the door in annis tongue. This is the name of the smilodon that lives here ("Gulshadir" means "one-eyed, lame-brained, big cat"). If the PCs are noisy or talking as they approach the door, they have a 40% chance of drawing Gulshadir out to attack them with a normal chance for surprise. Unless the PCs use magical means to cover their entrance, Gulshadir will not be surprised.

> This cave, though spacious, seems small because of the yellowed bones that completely cover the ground. Some still have greasy meat attached to them. You hen notice a large, yellow-furred tiger stalking toward you from the shadows at the rear of the cavern. Six-inch fangs protrude from either side of its great mouth, and it has only one good eye. With little warning, the tiger growls and leaps to attack.

The DM should roll initiative as normal. Gulshadir is Vexia's pet. He is used to being fed by the ogres from area H9, who toss meat (from area H13) to him from the doorway. The PCs may notice that, for a smilodon, Gulshadir has grown quite lazy and fat.

**Smilodon:** INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 7+2; hp 40; THAC0 11 (13); #AT 3; Dmg 2-5/2-5/2-12; SA rear claws rake for 2-8/2-8; SD +2 on surprise; SZ L; ML 10; XP 650; MC (Cats, Great).

Some of the bones are human or humanoid, but there is nothing of value in the lair.

**H9. Ogre's Playroom.** Before the PCs enter, determine whether the ogres inside will be surprised. If the adventurers have dealt with Gulshadir (area H8), the ogres may (50% chance) have heard his roars and be preparing to feed him. If so, only one ogre will be in this room. The other will be in area H13 getting meat for Gulshadir. The DM should modify the boxed text accordingly.

> This room is large, and torches burn in brackets all around the walls. In the center is a 10′-long table made of wooden slats and logs. Sitting at the table are two 9′-tall humanoid creatures wearing furs over their dull-brown skin. They appear startled at your entrance, and one of them barks something at you in a guttural voice.

The actions of the ogres depend on whether the PCs have surprised them. If the PCs have obtained surprise, the ogres are unprepared to fight and may be peacefully approached by a careful, powerful-looking party. If the PCs attack the ogres outright, the ogres react by hefting and flinging the large table onto the party. The DM should make a normal attack roll against 1-3 members of the party. Each PC hit takes 2-8 hp damage. After this initial attack, the ogres run to area H10, try to wake their sleeping comrade there, and grab their weapons.

The ogre who spoke asked, "Who are you?" in Ogrish. If the PCs respond quickly in either Orcish or Ogrish, the ogres might speak with them but will grow angry and attack in six rounds. If the PCs mention Vexia's name, the ogres suddenly become fearful, cautious, and sober. They demand that the PCs tell them what has happened to Vexia. If the PCs don't respond in a convincing manner, the ogres attack.

If the PCs do not obtain surprise, the ogres will be ready. They will have taken their weapons from area 10, awakened the ogre there, and be waiting for the PCs as it says in the boxed description. The ogres ask the PCs who they are and wait until the adventurers attempt to answer before tossing the table (as above) and grabbing their weapons (hidden on the floor) to attack.

**Ogres** (2): INT low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 27, 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA +2 to damage; SZ L; ML 11; XP 175; MC; mace, sword.

Also in the room are two 4'-tall benches, several 1'-tall mugs, some chicken bones, and four mottled sacks of feathers (pillows). The ogres' treasure is kept in room 10.

**H10. Ogres' Den.** If the ogres at area H9 were surprised by the party, the **ogre** (hp 21; see area H9 for complete statistics) in this room is in a drunken sleep, lying on the upside-down table. If not, he is armed with a *battle axe +1* from the ogres' treasury and is waiting behind the door to surprise the intruders (normal chance for surprise).

The sharp smell of old drink issues strongly from this room. A large barrel, the lid gone, is overturned and empty near the west wall. The place looks as if a great deal of fighting has taken place here recently. Several torch brackets lie on the floor, while one torch burns against the north wall. Torn cloth and smashed wood splinters are scattered all around. These are the remains of the crude beds the ogres once used. Great gouges have been taken out of the packed-dirt floor, and another large table lies upside down in the center of the room. The ogres have had several disagreements lately and have fought and tumbled about the room, destroying its contents. The treasures of the ogres are buried in cloth sacks 1' underneath the dirt in the northeast corner. The treasure consists of a *battle axe +1* (noted above), a potion of *fire resistance*, 440 sp, and 38 gp.

The ogre will fight ferociously, but not effectively, with a −1 on attack rolls and +5 on damage (−2/+4 without the magical axe).

**H11. Kitchen.**

> The intense heat and smoke in this room comes from a crude fire pit in the northwest corner of the chamber. Several orcs are moving around the room's three, bulky tables, carrying pieces of bloody meat, knives, and long cleavers. The orcs and two human women at the fire pit cower in fear whenever they must approach a large humanoid who is devouring an immense charred carcass.

If the PCs do not obtain surprise, the orcs shout an alarm and arm themselves.

The large humanoid is an ogre named **Kromig** (hp 29; see area H9 for complete statistics), the biggest and meanest of the annis's ogre servants. He attacks with a long spiked club, commanding the orcs to attack also (but the orcs stay at the rear of the fray). If the PCs beat Kromig efficiently and do not attack the orcs, they will leave the PCs alone. If the orcs are questioned (they speak only Orcish) and threatened, they reveal that Vexia has been gone a long time, and they don't think she will be coming back.

Fighting in this room may (40% chance) alert the ogres in area H12, who will arrive in 5-8 rounds.

The women have been prisoners for four months and know a little that can help the PCs. They claim to have never seen Vexia but say that there is a large giant in the caves, and that he and the ogres are indulging themselves on food from the hag's cellar. The women will not share these facts with the PCs unless asked, but will stay with the party until they are safely out of reach of the hag's minions. They live with the other prisoners in area H12 and can tell the PCs about the others held there.

Kromig's half-devoured food is the carcass of an elf. Most of the meat in the kitchen is human, demihuman, chicken, or beef. In addition to his war club, Kromig carries a jewel-hilted dagger (worth 150 gp) and 60 sp in a pouch hidden inside his bearskin tunic.

**Orcs** (6): INT average; AL LE; AC 6 (10); MV 9 (12); HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 8; XP 15; MC.

**Women** (2): AL CN; AC 10; MV 12; zero-level humans; hp 3, 2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 9; MC; knife.

**H12. Ogre Den and Prisoner Pen.** If the ogres in this room are alerted to a fight, either in area 11 or elsewhere in the complex, they grab their weapons and rush to join the fight. Otherwise, they are found lying on their fur beds, unprepared. The DM should add the ogres' descriptions to the boxed text, if necessary.

> This chamber is large and dark. The walls are stone, but unfinished. Three piles of furs lie on the floor, and scattered around them are piles of rocks and dirt. The room smells strongly of sweat and spoiled milk. Against a large door in the northwest wall is propped the great trunk of a fir tree. From behind the door someone is crying.

If the **ogres** (hp 25, 22; halberd; see area H9 for complete statistics) are here when the PCs arrive, they are quick to respond to the intrusion (bash heads now, ask questions later). Their halberds are leaning against the wall near the tree trunk, and they will fight with them to the death, for they know that Vexia would kill them for letting intruders get this far.

Hidden under the fur piles are 400 sp, 550 gp, and four gems (worth 500 gp, 250 gp (×2), and 50 gp).

The fir trunk is kept against the door to keep the remainder of the orc and human slaves in their quarters. It can be lifted away from the door with a combined strength of at least 34.

Behind the door is a small, dirty cave in which two **orcs** (hp 4 each; dagger; see area H11 for complete statistics) and two **women** (hp 2 each; unarmed; see area H11 for complete statistics) fear for their lives. They have been badly beaten by the ogres (ogre games tend to be rough) and are lamenting their state. The women have been here, as slaves, for over six months, and they have watched many other prisoners be eaten. The ogres save the live food for special occasions, but the cellar stores are running out.

The women and orcs know from talking with the ogres that Vexia was last seen leaving the caves to chase after a man in the woods. Apparently, she had chased him many times before, but he had always escaped her. She hasn't been back to her lair in the last six months. They also know of another human—a warrior—that Vexia boasted of having captured before she left. They think that the warrior is being held somewhere in the caves. Once freed from their prison, the orcs try to escape from the lair, while the women stick close to the PCs until they are safe.

**H13. Vexia's Cellar.**

> At the bottom of the steps, the corridor opens into a 40' × 30' chamber with a flat stone ceiling 30' overhead. The chamber is dimly lit, and dark shapes hang above you in the air. The shadowy forms of sacks, barrels, and crates fill the room, stacked to heights above your heads. Most of them appear empty. The smells of salted meat, rotting fruits, moldy breads, and stale beer assault

your noses. The floor is sticky, as if something has been spilled on it, and insects buzz around the room. Loud, raucous singing comes from an exit to the north.

The hanging shapes are skinned animal carcasses suspended from hooks in the ceiling. The meat looks like it has been salted and left to cure, but it is spoiled. The six 8'-high kegs of sour mead here were stolen from an overland merchant caravan on the Tilverton-Mistledale road over a year ago. A few sacks are filled with breads, all covered with harmless mold. Smaller barrels and baskets are full of spoiled, slimy fruits and berries, but most of the containers are empty and strewn about the room in disorder.

Nothing in the room will harm the PCs unless they eat or drink something. Anyone who does so must make a saving throw vs. poison at −1 or become violently nauseated in 2-8 turns. The nausea lasts for 3-6 hours, during which time the character loses 2-8 points of strength and is unable to fight for more than two rounds at a time without taking a round to be sick. The light comes from mold growing on the spilled mead. The singing comes from room H17.

**H14. Spiders' Lair.** Vexia designed this room to lure any would-be trespassers to their deaths. The stairs descend 20' to the web-filled nest of three giant spiders that quickly swarm over anyone who enters this room.

The stairs are trapped so that anyone stepping on or prodding the fifth step will set off the trap. The staircase flattens out, and anyone standing on the steps must make a saving throw vs. paralyzation or slide down to the nest below. Such unfortunates take 1-3 hp damage from the fall, and the spiders get one free attack as if the characters were completely surprised. The spiders are hungry; they haven't been fed for two weeks. They attack until destroyed and have no treasure.

**Giant spiders** (3): INT low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 3, web 12; HD 4+4; hp 27, 25, 21; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 plus poison (save or die); SZ L; ML 13; XP 650; MC.

**Level Two**

**H15. Guard Chamber.**

Torches line the walls of the stairs to this room. Leading from the cellar (area 13), down the stairs, and through this 20'-square chamber to an arched, open door is a trail of sticky sour mead. Against the east wall, between the eastern and northern doors is a 10'-tall chair. Leaning against the wall next to the chair is an 8'-long club with metal spikes protruding from the thick end. On the floor in the center of the chamber is a crumpled black cloth.

From the open door in the northern wall you hear a deep, booming voice engaged in singing and reverie. The singer can't be seen in the chamber behind the door.

The chair, club, and black cloth belong to Vexia's executioner, an 18'-tall hill giant named Boris (see area H17 for statistics). The black cloth is the hood that he wears when butchering the hag's enemies or prisoners. He has stolen one of the kegs of sour mead and carried it from the cellar (area H13), through this chamber, and into his own quarters (area H17).

Anyone in this chamber can clearly hear the giant's singing, and if a PC can speak the hill giant tongue, he will be able to tell that the giant is drunk (his speech is slurred, and his grammar is bad, even for a hill giant). Unless the PCs make some incredible racket in this room, Boris will remain in his drunken reverie.

The door to Vexia's laboratory (room H16) is locked. Boris has the key in his left boot. Any thief has a normal chance to pick this lock.

**H16. Vexia's Laboratory.**

The stairs descend into a large room containing a 20'-long workbench covered with all kinds of alchemical equipment. Several beakers—some filled with multicolored powders, others empty—are surrounded by various parts of animals and the gnarled limbs of nightmarish creatures. Knives, ladles and other tools are scattered about. Some small creatures are crawling around on the floor beneath the table.

Against the north wall is another workbench covered with similar objects, including several jars and bottles of odd-colored liquids and the pickled innards of unknown creatures. The south wall is decorated with strange, illegible glyphs and scratches etched into the stone and brick.

A flurry of wings draws your attention to the east end of the room. Flapping about in a hanging wire cage, 5' tall, and 3' wide, are many winged creatures the size of a large crow. They have bat wings, claws, needlelike mouths, and hungry yellow eyes that glare out at you.

These creatures are stirges. They serve Vexia as lab test animals and instruments of torture.

**Stirges** (12): INT animal; AL N; AC 8; MV 3, fly 18 (C); HD 1+1; hp 5 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA blood drain; SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; MC.

Vexia dabbled in alchemical and necromantic experiments that produced horrible results. She has a large collection of pickled creature parts—and some she never got around to pickling. The briny, poisonous pickling fluid smells like vinegar. Anyone touching the fluid must save vs. poison at +2 or take 2d12 hp damage. A successful save halves this damage.

The creatures crawling on the floor are harmless beetles and roaches. Vexia would feed them to the other animals that she kept in the lab.

If the PCs search through the oddities on the central table for one turn, they can find several normal and giant badgers' claws, a foot-long reptilian stinger from a wyvern, a shrivelled human head shrunk to the size of an orange, an assortment of newts' eyes and bats' wings, and a water-filled mug holding an oversized black leech.

If the PCs search the bench along the north wall for a turn, they may recognize a few of the pickled items: a cow's tongue, a rabbit's ear, a faerie's wing, the horn of a unicorn, and a collection of human eyes (used to make *hag eyes).* They can also find an 80' length of charred but usable rope, a blood-encrusted dagger, and a large pot of black pitch. PCs searching for two turns will find four vials of liquid: poison (more of the pickling agent), a potion of

*diminution,* and philters of *glibness* and *love.* Searching for four turns up two more vials, containing elixirs of *madness* and *youth.*

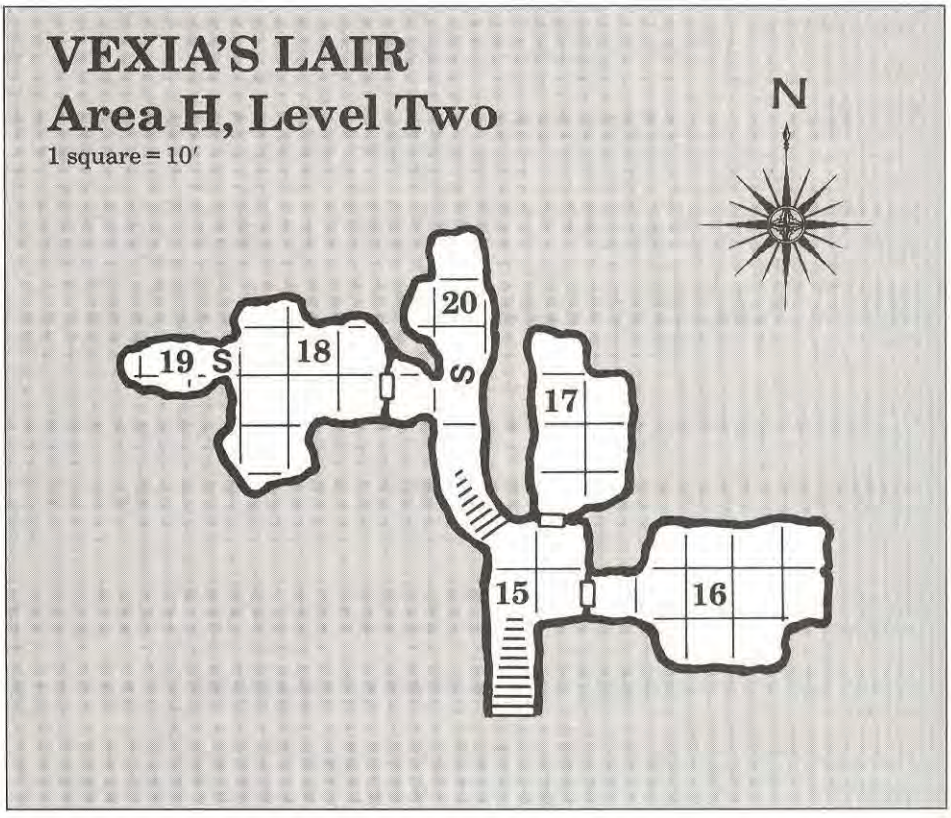
Hidden amid the clutter is a voluminous black leather sack that holds four containers. One jar is labelled "grahachi," which means "screams" in the annis tongue. If opened, this dark, translucent jar disgorges its contents: a piercing, many-toned wail that will *cause fear* (as the first-level priest spell) in anyone missing a saving throw vs. spells. The scream brings the giant, Boris, from area H17 within four rounds. Once the jar is opened and the scream has escaped, the spell will not work again.

The second container is a red-glazed clay jug. When the stopper is pulled, the pungent odor of cinnamon fills the air. This is the potion that Vexia seeks. It increases the imbiber's magic resistance by 40%, but only if she is a hag. Any PC who so much as sips this potion must make a saving throw vs. poison or lose 1-6 points each of constitution and strength for 2-8 turns.

The third container is smaller, made of glass, and contains over 250 dried husks of dead wasps. The fourth container is an empty silver ewer worth 14 gp.

The glyphs on the south wall are illegible without a *comprehend languages* or *read magic* spell. they describe the process by which a *hag eye* is made (see the *Monstrous Compendium* entry on "Hags").

The door to the stirges' cage is in the base, which hangs 3′ above the floor. The door is latched shut with a human femur. Opening it releases the stirges, who voraciously attack until slain.




**H17. Executioner's Room.** This cavelike chamber with a smooth stone floor is 30′ high and extends about 40′ into the rock. A lantern, hanging by a chain from the ceiling, sheds light on the whole room. At the rear of the cavern is another of the 8′-tall kegs of mead like those in the cellar (area H13). The smell of stale beer is almost overwhelming in this room. Toward the back of the chamber, on the east side, sits a 5′-long padlocked chest. Nearer the door, is a 5′-tall mound of furs, skins, and feathers.

The room echoes with the resounding notes of giant-song. Unless the 18′ tall giant has been alerted, he is slumped against the west wall and singing lustily. He wears thick brown animal hide over his massive shoulders and around his waist. His eyes are closed, and in each hand he swings a foot-tall mug, sloshing and spilling the meadlike drink onto the floor. He doesn't seem to notice the PCs.

This is Boris, Vexia's executioner. Although he is loyal to the hag and efficient at carrying out her will, he has been inactive during Vexia's long absence. He does worry about her when he is sober, and once in a while he takes a stroll around the lair and forest outside, calling Vexia's name. These searches are as much a reassurance to himself that Vexia isn't coming back to destroy his reverie as they are to find the missing witch. He occasionally feasts in the kitchen (area H11) with the ogres, and even remembers to take food and water to Vexia's secret prisoner (area H19) every now and then.

In his drunken state, Boris has a −6 penalty to be surprised and fights at a −2 penalty to his attack roll. However, because of his great size and hardiness, he sobers up in 2-12 rounds once he realizes there are intruders in the lair. If combat starts, he barrels out into the guard chamber (area H15), grabs his club, and begins to demolish everything in his way for 3-9 rounds. Each round, Boris has a 40% chance of attacking the furniture or doors near him instead of the PCs, causing such objects to save vs. crushing blow or be destroyed.

Though drunk, Boris can pose a great threat to the PCs if they attack him immediately. Clever, daring PCs may try to parley with him. In his state, Boris will be more likely to talk with intruders than kill them if approached in a friendly manner. The DM should roll on the reaction table (page 103 of the *DMG),* with a −2 modifier. Boris knows Common and will return the PCs' speech in that tongue.

If approached peacefully, Boris reveals that his mistress has been gone "for a long, long time," and he fears that she won't be coming back. He won't mention her name but talks about "bad ole Magg'rk and nashty Thess'thern," saying that his mistress hated them, though they often worked together. He complains about the itch on his back that he is unable to reach, and about how much food his mistress's secret

prisoner (see area H19) eats. "He hash eaten sho much, der's almos' nuttin' left in Mishtrssh' shellar!"

Boris's reaction to hearing his mistress's name pronounced aloud by the PCs could be startling, for he instantly grows wary, ashamed, and sober. The giant very coldly and slyly begins questioning the PCs about their knowledge of Vexia. He won't believe anything the PCs say and will try to take these "guests" to the prison cell in area H12, using force if he has to, while he goes searching for his mistress.

**Hill giant:** INT low; AL CE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 12+2; hp 66; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (fist) or 2d6+7 (club); SA hurl rocks for 2-16 hp damage; SZ H; ML 14; XP 3,000; MC (Giant, Hill).

Once Boris has begun fighting, he won't stop until he or all of his opponents are dead. Any ogres or orcs alerted to a fight will stay out of the way until either Boris is dead or he has calmed down.

The tall keg in the back of the room is one-third full of sour mead, most of which has been spilled and is now drying on the floor. The chest is locked and trapped with a poison needle (save vs. poison or die). It contains a small *shield +1,* a *short sword +2,* a potion of *superheroism,* a *bag of holding,* 1,000 sp, 1,250 gp, and six gems worth 500 gp, 250 gp (×2), 100 gp, and 50 gp (×2).

The hides and skins are Boris's bed; they are moth eaten and smell terrible. There is no treasure hidden here.

**H18. Vexia's Room.**

The darkness in the room is thick, and the dust seems to have settled long ago. Standing in the center of the odd-shaped room is a rusted iron kettle positioned on a circular tripod. Beneath the cauldron is a small depression in the worked stone of the floor. In the far south corner is a large bed, apparently made of sawdust and furs with wooden beams for a frame. The sleeping surface is 5′ high. A shelf in the northwest corner is attached to the wall 10′ above the floor. The L-shaped shelf runs 20′ along each wall. The ceiling is 15′ high. Standing in the corner below the shelf, shrouded in shadow, is a 6′-tall humanoid figure that doesn't move. The smell of dust, death, and decay are strong here.

This room has been entered by only Boris since Vexia's disappearance. The hill giant has passed through here to area H19 several times to feed the prisoner there, and his large footprints can be seen in the dust on the floor. The still, silent figure in the corner is a human zombie that guards the secret door to area H19 against all save Vexia and Boris. Anyone not accompanied by Boris who comes within 10′ of the door is attacked by the zombie. It will not pursue beyond the door to Vexia's room.

The cauldron is empty. The bed in the corner has been crudely made and left to gather dust. There is space beneath it for two man-sized figures to hide from anyone not specifically looking there. The space is empty now except for some dirt and dust balls.

On the long shelf are two bags of dried frog bodies, many normal spider webs, and a potion of *healing.* On the northern shelf sits what appears to be a stone block, 1′ × ½′. If this block is pressed it slides into the wall, causing a secret door in the west wall to unlock. Anyone investigating the shelf will be attacked by the zombie.

Part of the west wall beneath the shelf swings outward into area H19 if the brick on the shelf is pushed. The door relocks when shut and can be opened only by pressing the brick.

**Zombie:** INT non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 14; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; MR special; SZ M; ML special; XP 65; MC.

**H19. Prison Cell.**

This room smells of human waste and sweat. The rattling of chains draws your attention to the back of the chamber, where a figure sits on the floor, head bowed. Low moans come from the thin, bruised person.

This is Jerro Hamen, a ranger and agent of the Harpers. He was taken prisoner by Vexia over eight months ago, when he was investigating the forests around her lair. The witch knew that by taking this man prisoner, she would draw other searchers to her lair where they could be easily taken care of. She told the man this, but nothing has come of it. He hasn't been tortured by Vexia for over six months, just beaten and starved by the giant, and he suspects that problems have developed between Vexia and the other hags of the covey. Jerro has crossed paths with both Magglerak and Thessinthorn and knows that there is no end to the guile and treachery that they work on each other and those around them. He and others of his kind have been trying to eradicate the hags from the area for a long time. He will be very grateful if the PCs rescue him, and he can reveal a good deal of information about the hags (as much as the DM cares to tell).

To reward the PCs for their help, Jerro passes their names and descriptions throughout the Harper organization, so that any other agents who come in contact with the PCs will help them. Jerro has no knowledge of any nymphs named Willori or Buttercup— "But that doesn't mean they don't exist. Maybe I just never met them," he replies.

**Jerro Hamen:** AL LG; AC 10 (8); MV 5 (10); R4; hp 8 (25); THAC0 19 (17); #AT 1; Dmg 1 (+1); S 17, D 16, C 15, I 11, W 12, Ch 10; ML 14. The statistics given first are for Jerro's current weak state; those in parentheses are for his normal condition. He is dressed in only ragged trousers. His equipment is in area H20.

Once Jerro and the PCs have returned to the surface, he thanks them again and promises them payment at a later date. Within one month, as the PCs are traveling through any of the Dalelands, they meet an 8th-level bard agent of the Harpers who presents them with a coffer of coins totalling 4,000 gp and two potions of *healing.* However, if the PCs attacked Rinthal (encounter area A), their rescue of Jerro Hamen will only slightly lighten their punishment.

If the door to this area is accidentally shut, a successful bend bars/lift gates roll (at −20%) is needed to open it from the inside.

If all PCs become trapped in the room, they must wait for the giant to return. If Boris is not dead, he opens the door two days later and brings in a jug of water and a plate of food (the gross meat from the kitchen and the old fruit from the cellar). Upon seeing the PCs, he attempts to remove one or two of them as his main course of the evening. This pattern continues until all the PCs are dead or Boris is killed.

**H20. Vexia's Treasury.** The door to this chamber opens onto is a 5′-diameter crawlspace set 6′ up on the wall. A *permanent illusion* (cast by a now-dead prisoner) makes it look just like the rest

of the corridor. Once the PCs climb into the room and have a light source, read the following to the players:

> The ceiling of this chamber is only 8' high; the floor is at the level of the crawlspace through which you entered. Most of the cave's rock floor is covered with coins: gold, silver, platinum, and even electrum. Other items, including jewelry and weapons, decorate five humanoid skeletons. A low wail comes from the north end of the cave, growing in pitch and intensity as a ghostlike figure coalesces before you.

This is a *programmed illusion* (cast by the same long-dead prisoner noted previously) of a groaning spirit. Everyone in the cave must make a saving throw vs. spells or fall unconscious for 6-36 turns. The DM should make those that fail believe that they have fallen victim to the *death wail* of a groaning spirit and are now dead. The *programmed illusion* begins again any time someone enters the cave and moves toward the treasure, and each conscious person inside must make another saving throw vs. spells. PCs can attempt to disbelieve in the spirit, in which case they may make another saving throw attempt at +3. This may be done only once, but anyone succeeding is immune to the spell's effects thereafter. The spirit merely wails; it does not attack physically but dodges out of reach of the PCs' blows. The wail alerts Boris (area H17) and the ogres (area H12), who arrive in 3-6 rounds unless previously eliminated by the PCs.

The treasure consists of a potion of *ventriloquism,* a potion of *fire resistance,* a scroll of five wizard spells (*enlarge, wall of stone, polymorph self, unseen servant, read magic),* a silver necklace (worth 3,000 gp), 115 pp, 740 gp, 95 ep, and 660 sp. The cave also contains Jerro Hamen's adventuring gear: *chain mail +2,* a bastard sword, a *dagger +2,* a long bow, a quiver of 16 arrows, three *arrows +1,* and a silver moon-and-lyre pin (the sign of the Harpers).

## Return to the Black Glen

Once the PCs have cleaned out Vexia's lair and obtained the nymph's potion (or maybe only the latter), they should plan on returning to the Black Glen to meet the nymph. If they have guessed the nymph's true nature, they may attempt to do away with her while it is easy. If not, and the DM judges that the PCs are powerful enough to handle Vexia once she regains her powers, he should let the party complete their mission. If, however, the PCs still have no inkling that the nymph Willori is the witch Vexia, the PCs should have the following encounter while traveling on the Shroud Path on their way to the Black Glen.

> Ahead of you, seated on one of the skull-covered talismans placed along the path, is a large charcoal-colored raven. It lets out a squawk to get your attention, then drops down to the ground. While quizzically eyeing a beautiful cluster of wild flowers on the edge of the path, it picks up a rock in one of its claws and drops it into the flowers. You hear a loud hiss, and a lightning-fast figure lunges out of the flowers to strike at the raven. But the raven has already flown up and now flaps away down the Shroud Path. You hear a human voice say, "Beware!" and see the evil-looking snake recoil itself beneath the flowers to wait for you.

The snake is far enough off of the Shroud Path that the PCs can avoid it or kill it at a distance with a spear. The raven is Aubaerus, the Ravenmaster, who has taken this opportunity to warn the PCs. He feels that he should not interfere too much but should provide the PCs with enough information to be responsible for the consequences of their actions. After using the snake to give the PCs an omen (from the beautiful and innocent strikes danger and death) he will not communicate further with the party.

**Snake:** INT animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+1; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (save at +2 or die in 2-8 rounds); SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; MC (Snake, poisonous, normal).

When the PCs arrive at the Black Glen, everything appears normal. Vexia/Willori will know they are coming through the use of the *hag eye,* unless the PCs destroyed it during the adventure. If so, she is wary, and yells to them from the edge of the forest to leave the potion by the black cauldron. She gives the excuse that it is the nymphs' way of exchanging gifts. If asked about the reward, she offers to

conduct the PCs to a buried horde of gems (nonexistent) after she has the potion. She sounds sincere but very anxious. If the PCs refuse to give her the potion or try to coax her out into the open, she uses her *fog cloud* ability to approach the PCs for one surprise snatch at the red clay jug (if she knows where it is). Vexia gets a surprise modifier of −5 on this roll, grabbing the jug successfully on a 10 or better on 1d20. She will try only once, however, then flee.

If the PCs didn't destroy the *hag eye*, Vexia is more relaxed, believing that all is going according to her plan. She approaches the PCs openly, happily, and anxiously, promising a reward as above. If attacked in nymph form, she uses her *fog cloud* ability to shield her escape.

Once she has the potion, Vexia unstoppers the jug and drains the contents in one round. With her altered magic resistance, she has a 60% chance of shrugging off the effects of the witches' *curse*. If the potion is successful, she begins laughing. Within two rounds, she will have gained back all of her powers as she shifts to annis form. Vexia then attacks the PCs until they are all dead or she has been defeated (she won't stop to eat someone during the fray).

Vexia's annis form is terrifying. Her dark silver hair is long and wispy. Her fangs are 3″ long and dull black. Her eyes are dull green and piercing. Her nose is long and pointed. She is just over 8′ tall, with talons sharp as razors. Her dress is a long, tattered robe that hangs to the ground, tied around the waist by a belt of human skulls.

If the potion doesn't work, Vexia begins cursing and raving in a very unnymphlike manner. She attacks the nearest PC with her bare hands, doing no damage, then attempts to escape (as above), vowing to destroy all of her enemies some day.

## Concluding the Adventure

The PCs will end this adventure having discovered a great evil. Though the hags have not formed a covey at the moment, the potential is there. Even separated, the hags are powerfully evil. If left alone, their borders will gradually expand until they pose a threat to all travelers in the area.

Should Vexia escape in nymph form, she will return to her lair. If the PCs have killed the giant and most of the ogres, she will be able to enter and reach her laboratory. Given a few months, she may (DM's decision) be able to create another remedy potion for the *curse*.

Once Vexia regains her annis powers (and if she survives the encounter with the PCs at the Black Glen), she begins her revenge on the other hags. An all-out war may develop, with each hag seeking to bolster her own defenses by drawing on the surrounding land. The resultant concentration of evil will concern Aubaerus immensely. He may even hold the PCs responsible and demand, through an apprentice druid, that they remedy the situation. He may demand that the PCs destroy Vexia or clear the hags out of the area. If the PCs agree to this task, they will certainly merit a little help from the Harpers. But if the PCs attacked Rinthal of Deepingdale (encounter B), they may be forced to clear the hags from the area as an act of restitution.

There are many possibilities for further adventures in the hags' forest. The DM can expand on the lairs of Houpshe, Thessinthorn, and Magglerak. They have acquired much treasure (to be determined by the DM) over the years through their power and treachery, and will continue to plot and scheme against humankind.

If all of the hags are destroyed, the concentration of evil in the area is broken. The Shroud Path and Black Glen are quickly overgrown and claimed by the forest, aided by Aubaerus and other druids.

There are rumored to be ruins of an elven civilization around Lake Sember. While clearing out one of the hags' lairs, the PCs may discover a map to this area, which has also become corrupted by the presence of the hags.

If driven away but not completely destroyed, the villainesses could return at some time and place to exact revenge on the do-gooders who foiled their plans. Ω

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# EX LIBRIS

BY RANDY MAXWELL

## A dungeon that offers a truly moving experience.

Artwork by Tom Baxa

*Randy writes: "This is the tenth of my modules to appear in DUNGEON® Adventures. I cannot, with a good conscience, claim full credit for it. The hard part (the moving dungeon and the mechanics therein) was handed to me by Barbara Young. All I had to do was write a module around it. Making sure that the moving dungeon and adventure actually worked was taken care of by Dale Donovan, Roger Moore, and other valiant members of the DUNGEON Adventures team. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all, many times, for many things."*

"Ex Libris" is an AD&D® 2nd Edition module for 4-7 player characters of levels 5-8 (about 38 total levels). A mixed party of experienced and well-equipped adventurers is recommended. The dungeon in this module contains rooms that shift and move about. The DM must become thoroughly familiar with the moving dungeon and the game mechanics involved before attempting to run the adventure.

This scenario takes place in the mountains northeast of Silverymoon in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® fantasy setting and uses names and histories from this area. The sourcebook FR5 *The Savage Frontier* can be helpful in orienting the adventure and detailing the background material. DMs not using the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign set, or who have an established campaign elsewhere in the Realms, may place the adventure in a similar region. Due to the nature of the plot, any PCs who are priests of Oghma may have difficulties with their church if they take part in this adventure (these difficulties are strictly with the church hierarchy and not with the deity). It is left to the DM's discretion whether such a PC should take part.

### Adventure Background

The PCs have been hired by the Silverymoon town library, the Vault of Sages, to find the ruins of an old library and recover any magical or sage-lore tomes they find therein. Their reward for success is 5,000 gp, plus payment for all books recovered. The adventurers can keep any non-book treasure they find.

The old library was once called Bard Keep and was a temple dedicated to Oghma, god of knowledge, invention, and patron of bards (see the *Cyclopedia*

*of the Realms,* page 13, or the book *FORGOTTEN REALMS Adventures,* page 29, for details concerning Oghma). The head librarian of the Vault of Sages, Orand Zalthik, has decided the time is right to finance an expedition to the ruins. As is always the case with financed expeditions, the PCs must leave enough money or goods on deposit with the town officials to pay for the goods and services they use for the expedition. The deposit will be returned when the party returns, thus ensuring that unscrupulous adventurers will not take advantage of the librarian.

## For the Dungeon Master

The Vault of Sages has, so far, left Bard Keep in peace and never mounted an expedition to explore its ruins. No expedition was sent primarily because the temple of Oghma in Silverymoon, called the Halls of Inspiration, has declared their old library off limits to everyone (see "History of Bard Keep" for details).

The librarians of the Vault of Sages have, over the long years, honored the Halls of Inspiration's edict against such trespass. Some librarians did this because they were good Oghmanians and obeyed the church's pronouncements, while others were not willing to cause trouble or rock any boats. But recently, when the former librarian of the Vault died of old age, Orand Zalthik became the head librarian. Zalthik is of a much different mind than his predecessors. He wishes to expand the Vault of Sages and increase the number of scrolls, tomes, and books it holds. If this expansion ruffles a few feathers or steps on a few toes, so be it. That the Vault of Sages remains a thriving dynamic force in Silverymoon and the North is the only thing that matters to him.

**Orand Zalthik:** AL LN; AC 10; MV 12; M3; hp 8; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg by spell or weapon type; I 17, W 16; ML 12; dagger; Spells: *comprehend languages, read magic, detect evil.*

Orand appears to be a normal human but is actually half-elven. He is intelligent, urbane, and learned. The librarian is impressed only by knowledge, not magical power or brute force. Orand supplies the PCs with a map ("Silverymoon and Environs").

The DM can either read or paraphrase the following or role-play the information, answering PC questions using the information given below. If the DM wishes, a copy of the "History of Bard Keep" can be given to the PCs as a scroll from the Vault of Sages.

### Known History of Bard Keep

Bard Keep was a flourishing center of knowledge and learning in the wildlands. It was one of what were then regionally known as the "Three Pillars of Learning": Bard Keep, the Herald's Holdfast (just west of Silverymoon), and the Vault of Sages (in Silverymoon itself).

While Bard Keep was heavily defended and prepared for an attack from without, it fell to an attack from within. A century ago, a powerful priest named Khossack became enamored of some dark magic. Some sages say Khossack's mind was warped by illithids, others claim he was magically corrupted by an evil mage, and there is even speculation his mind was defiled by reading the *Book of Vile Darkness.*

Whatever the reason, Khossack was corrupted and subsequently ensnared followers to his cause. They rebelled against the teachings of Oghma, and the result was a bloody coup and the destruction of the temple. The faithful (those priests who remained true to Oghma) and Khossack's followers slaughtered each other without mercy.

Eventually, the rebellious priests gained the upper hand and were on the verge of taking control of the temple complex when Min, high priest of Bard Keep, set the keep's tower ablaze by conjuring a fire elemental. The resulting inferno caused the tower to collapse, killing the high priest, rebels, and faithful alike.

The few surviving faithful priests quickly abandoned the area. The remaining rebels claimed the temple, but their victory was short lived. Divination spells revealed that they were almost immediately destroyed by internal power struggles. Khossack was soon assassinated, and rival schisms fought each other for control of the ruined temple. The rival factions were completely unscrupulous, using undead warriors and other unsavory tactics. Eventually the place was populated more by undead than by the living and had to be abandoned.

Bard Keep is now known only as "the ruins" and is believed to be haunted—by whom or what is unknown. Also unknown is what became of the collection of tomes, books, and scrolls in Bard Keep. Some sages insist that the library must have been completely destroyed in the fire and collapse of the tower, while others claim that the books remain hidden and unharmed somewhere in the ruins.

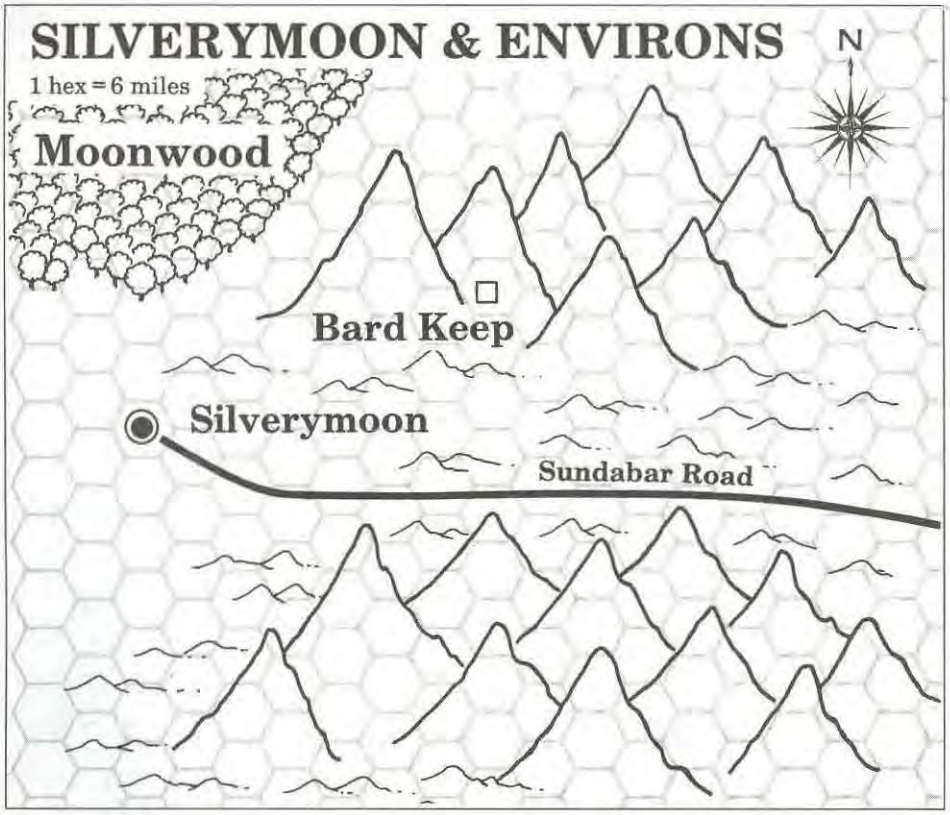
The faithful priests who survived the rebellion established themselves in Silverymoon and helped found a new temple to Oghma. This is how the Halls of Inspiration came into being. Because of the rebellion, the hierarchy of the Oghmanian church has disowned Bard Keep, and its current condition is unknown.

### An Additional Complication

Orand does not deal with the PCs in complete honesty. While he does not want the Vault to get a reputation for dishonesty or cheating adventurers, he also does not want to scare the PCs off. Unless the PCs ask specifically why the Oghmanian temple in Silverymoon isn't involved with the expedition, Orand keeps all such information to himself. On the other hand, he is not particularly deceitful or adept at lying. If the PCs do ask an awkward question concerning the Halls of Inspiration or some other Oghmanian temple, he will relate the following information (again, the DM may give this information as a scroll, a kind of addendum to the History of Bard Keep):

The hierarchy of the church of Oghma has declared Bard Keep a "pariah." Pariah is an ignoble (rather than noble) status or title given by the Oghmanian church hierarchy to denote that a person, place, or thing no longer exists in the eyes of the church. This status reflects how church officials see things and is not necessarily how the deity they serve views the matter. A pariah can be, and often is, designated as the result of internal church politics, schisms, or power struggles rather than any serious blasphemy or offense against a deity. In Bard Keep's case, the rebellion of the priests was considered a serious and blasphemous event.

The church acknowledges the existence of a pariah only so it can be avoided by church members. Also, the church enforces this outcast status. Pariah persons are completely and wholly ostracized and are often forced into exile or isolation. Pariah things are destroyed or locked away in the deepest,




darkest dungeons of the church where they are never seen again. Pariah places are unguarded but are watched. If the church becomes aware of people going to a pariah location, it will attempt to stop them.

As a pariah locale, Bard Keep is never mentioned, discussed, and certainly never visited by Oghmanians. As far as all good Oghmanians are concerned, the old library does not exist and never existed. To the church hierarchy, it now exists only as an abstract evil that the general public need not know about and must be protected from. Also, as pariah status is virtually absolute and irrevocable, the Halls of Inspiration has no authority to repeal or overturn it. The PCs will not be allowed to meet with the Inspired Ones, the ruling council of the Halls of Inspiration, to discuss Bard Keep under any circumstances. As far as the Halls of Inspiration is concerned, the subject is closed—permanently.

### The Journey

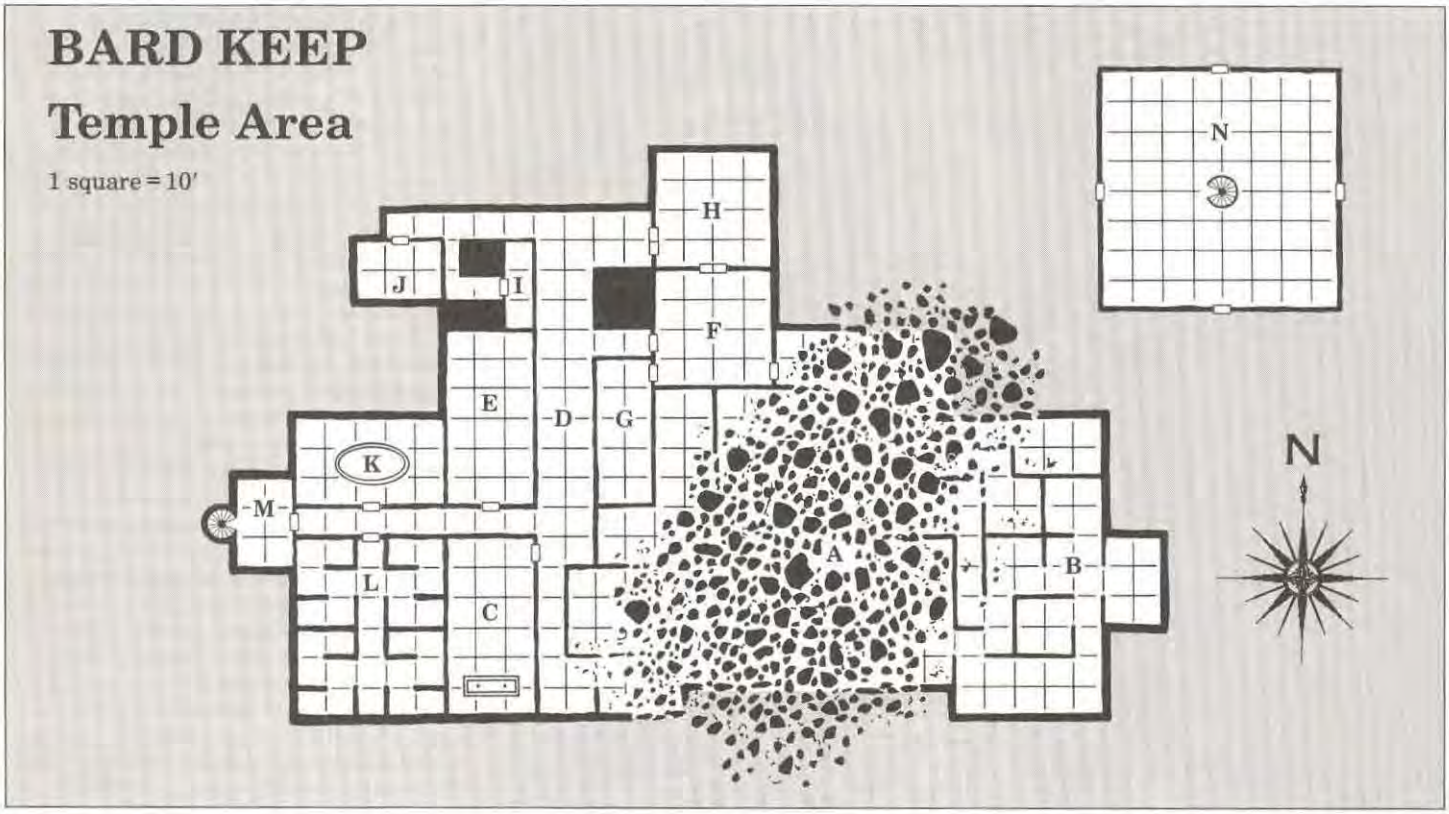
Whether PCs attempt to discuss the matter or not, the Inspired Ones know that Orand has been advertising for adventurers, and they have heard of Orand's plans to find Bard Keep. The Inspired Ones have quickly hired their own adventuring party to cut the PCs off and drive them away from Bard Keep. The Inspired Ones are not evilly motivated and do not necessarily want to kill the PCs; they just do not want the PCs exploring Bard Keep. However, since Oghma is a neutrally aligned deity, the Inspired Ones will not hesitate to use force if necessary to stop the PC party. No Oghmanian moral maxims are breached or compromised by such a course of action. However, the Inspired Ones were less than inspired in their choice of hirelings. The NPCs sent to intercept the PC party have their own plans concerning Bard Keep (see room 8 of the library for details).

The PCs' journey to the old temple should not be difficult. The ruins of Bard Keep lie outside the areas patrolled by any militia, yet the patrolled areas are close enough that the more intelligent monsters keep their distance. The DM may use the instructions for encounters on pages 13-14 of the *DM's Sourcebook of the Realms* or use Table 56, Frequency and Chance of Wilderness Encounters, page 101 of the

### Wilderness Encounters

Roll 1d6. If more than one creature type is given, use the first listing for daylight encounters and the second listing for night encounters.

1. **Bugbears** (5-20): Int low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 3+1; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 or by weapon type; SA surprise, +2 to damage; SZ L; ML 12; XP 120; MC.
   **Urds** (6-24): Int low; AL NE; AC 8; MV 6, F1 15 (C); HD 3; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3 or 1-4 (weapon); SA rock bomb for 2-8 hp damage; SZ S; ML 7; XP 65; MC.
2. **Hobgoblins** (10-40 (1d4×10)): Int average; AL LE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 1+1; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; XP 35; MC.
   **Trolls** (3-12): Int low; AL CE; AC 4; MV 12; HD 6+6; THACO 13; #AT 3; Dmg 5-8/5-8/6-12; SA +5 to damage if fighting with a weapon; SD regeneration; SZ L; ML 14; XP 1,400; MC.
3. **Giant ants** (8-64 workers): Int animal; AL N; AC 3; MV 18; HD 2; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SZ T; ML 9; XP 35; MC.
   **Orcs** (10-40): Int average; AL LE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 1; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8 or by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; XP 15; MC.
4. **Huge spiders** (3-12): Int animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 18; HD 2+2; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA surprise, poison; SZ M; ML 8; XP 270; MC.
   **Goblins** (10-40): Int low; AL LE; AC 6; MV 6; HD 1−1; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 or by weapon type; SZ S; ML 10; XP 15; MC.
5. **Barbarians** (10-40): AL CN; AC 10; MV 12; F2; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 9; XP 15; MC (Men). DMs using FR5 *The Savage Frontier* can alter this encounter to suit themselves by using information on the Uthgardt barbarian tribes.
   **Bandits** (10-40): AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; F1; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA missiles; ML 13; XP 15; MC (Men); leather armor, long sword, long bow, 20 arrows each.
6. **Hill giants** (1-4): Int low; AL CE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 12+1; THAC0 9; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 or by weapon type (2-12+7); SA hurl rocks for 2-16 hp damage; SZ H; ML 13; MC; and
   **Ogres** (3-12): Int low; AL CE; AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10 or by weapon type; SA +2 to damage; SZ L; ML 12; XP 175; MC; huge clubs (1d10+2 damage).




*Dungeon Master's Guide* for random encounter checks. Treat the terrain type as hills for all checks. If an encounter is called for, consult the "Wilderness Encounters" sidebar herein. Any creatures encountered in this area are ready for battle. The more intelligent creatures habitually raid caravans using the road between Silverymoon and Sundabar.

## The Temple

While the road to the ruined temple has long since been overgrown and no trace exists, the PCs should have no trouble locating the ruins. From a distance, the ruins appear to be an ugly scar, well below the snow line, about one-third of the way up the southern slope of the mountain shown on the PCs' map. As the PCs approach within one mile, the scar begins to shape itself into overgrown ruins, rubble, and buildings. The overall appearance of the ruins is not particularly sinister, but it seems a sad, lonely, and forsaken place.

The old ruins are indeed haunted. Oghma took vengeance on the rebel priests by preventing their spirits from ever finding rest. The rebels are doomed to roam the old temple as heucuva. The temple is haunted by 13 of these horrid undead creatures. Unless otherwise noted, they have these statistics:

**Heucuva** (13): Int semi; AL CE; AC 3; MV 9; HD 2; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA polymorph, disease; SD turned as wight, hit only by silver or magical weapons, immune to mind-influencing spells; SZ M; ML 11; XP 270; MC.

**A. Ruined Tower and Environs.** Fire-blackened granite blocks are all that remains of the tower of Bard Keep. The crumbling blocks are strewn over a wide area in jumbled profusion. The tower fell nearly 100 years ago, and the grass, weeds, moss, and lichen have slowly claimed its shattered remnants.

If the PCs attempt to search among these fallen stones, they discover the rubble-strewn area is heavily infested with snakes, giant spiders, giant rats, and other vermin. These creatures have constructed extensive lairs in, under, and around the fallen stones. If disturbed, they attack immediately. If the PCs merely walk among the stones, there is a 10% chance per turn of accidentally disturbing a nest or lair of one of these creatures. If the PCs actively dig up or turn over stones and blocks, there is a 30% chance per turn of disturbing a nest or lair. If the PCs disturb a nest or lair, consult the "Rubble Encounters" sidebar for the number and type of creatures involved.

If the PCs search the rubble, they find only small bits of broken pottery and an occasional small piece of charred wood or twisted piece of metal. There is nothing else for the PCs to find. Everything in the tower, including most of the magical books belonging to Bard Keep, was either burned in the fire or crushed and pulverized in its collapse.

**B. Burned Area.** These rooms are nothing but burned-out shells. When the tower fell, the resulting shower of sparks set this area of the temple ablaze. Except for size, these rooms are indistinguishable from each other, and it is impossible to tell what they once contained or were used for. The floor of each room is covered with charcoal and charred rubble. Each has the same fire-blackened walls and is open to the sky, for the ceilings collapsed during the fire. If the PCs search, they find nothing

**Rubble Encounters**

Roll 1d10

1. **Giant rats** (4-16): Int semi; AL N(E); AC 7; MV 12; HD ½; hp 3 each; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA disease; SZ T; ML 7; XP 15; MC.
2. **Giant centipedes** (2-20): Int non; AL N; AC 9; MV 15; HD ¼; hp 2 hp each; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SA poison (type O); SZ T; ML 7; XP 35; MC.
3. **Large spiders** (3-18): Int non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6, web 15; HD 1+1; hp 6 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1 hp; SA poison (type A); SZ S; ML 7; XP 175; MC.
4. **Osquips** (2-8): Int animal; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; burrow ½; HD 3+1; hp 14 each; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 2-12; SD burrow through stone; SZ T; ML 7; XP 120; MC.
5. **Snakes** (1-6): Int animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 9 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison; SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; MC.
6. **Giant ants** (3-24 workers): Int animal; AL N; AC 3; MV 18; HD 2; hp 9; THACO 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SZ T; ML 9; XP 35; MC.
7. **Land lampreys** (2-12): Int non; AL N; AC 7; MV 12; HD 1+2; hp 7 each; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1 hp/round; SA blood drain; SZ S; ML 7; XP 120; MC.
8. **Rot grubs** (5-20): Int non; AL N; AC 9; MV 1; HD ⅛; hp 1 each; THACO nil; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA kill victim in 1-3 turns; SZ T; ML 5; XP 15; MC.
9. **Loose stones:** A PC (of the DM's choice or rolled randomly) steps on a loose stone and falls, twisting an ankle or wrenching a knee for 1-4 hp damage; movement reduced by half for 1-4 hours.
10. **Loose stones and lair:** A PC takes damage exactly as for a roll of 9, but also disturbs a lair in the process. Roll 1d8 and consult this table for the type and number of creatures involved.

but ruined, unidentifiable junk. Even the creatures living in the rubble of the tower seldom venture here.

**C. Mock Altar.** This room contains a mock altar used by the heucuva. There is always at least one heucuva in this room. This undead priest searches ceaselessly through the altar room as if looking for something it has lost. According to necromancers, this is a common behavior exhibited by many heucuva. Some speculate the heucuva is searching for its lost devotion, while others contend it is looking for death and a release from its doom.

This particular heucuva is the undead priest **Khossack** (hp 15), the instigator of the Bard Keep rebellion. He wears a large gold chain worth 150 gp and small coronal worth 50 gp. In life, the chain and coronal signified Khossack was the high priest of the temple. Now, the chain helps hold the rotting tatters of his robs to his skeletal form. The coronal is askew on his skull, as if tossed there in some grim ring-toss game. In undeath, Khossack appears to be nothing more than a sad marionette moving on the strings of his own undoing. This appearance is deceiving; Khossack is just as deadly as any other heucuva. He attacks anyone entering the mock altar room and will pursue throughout the temple complex until either he or the intruders are destroyed.

The room seems nothing more than a normal Oghmanian altar room, with worshipers kneeling on prayer rugs facing a large stone table on a raised dias. If this were a normal temple, there would be a symbol of Oghma, a large partially unrolled scroll, and a lute or harp on the table. Closer inspection of the room reveals it is now a horrid imitation of a normal Oghmanian worship chamber. Kneeling on prayer rugs, their heads bowed to the floor before the altar, are the decomposing bodies of 18 orcs. About 18 months ago, 15 of these orcs attempted to shelter from the weather in the temple ruins. They have been "sheltered" here ever since. If PCs search the bodies, they find only 10 gp in copper pieces and a *dagger +1*.

Three of the orcish corpses are actually **heucuva** (hp 9 each) using their *polymorph* ability. Only spells or magical devices detecting evil or negating illusions (*detect evil, detect undead, gem of seeing, wand of enemy detection,* etc.) reveal the heucuva's presence.

These undead wait until PCs are engaged in battle with Khossack before attacking. They attempt to both surprise the PCs and attack the rear of the party. Use Table 35: Combat Modifiers on page 52 of the *DMG* for applicable penalties or bonuses. If the *polymorphed* heucuva are discovered and attacked before they can use this strategy, use Table 35 (as above) with the heucuva treated as prone and surprised. The penalties and bonuses apply for only the first round of attack by either party. After the first round, combat modifiers are determined normally by the DM based on the actions of the heucuva and the PCs.

Inspection of the room reveals the heucuva have removed all symbols of Oghma and in their place set a different symbol: that of a book, tightly bound so it cannot be opened. Also on the table is a lute, its strings cut and its neck broken. Give good-aligned priests a 500 XP bonus if they destroy or direct others to destroy the mock altar.

The heucuva are doomed to forever mock the values and principles they vowed to serve but instead betrayed. They want no learning to take place here, no music to sound. They want no insights or inspiration to be found within these walls. Years ago, when they rebelled, they traded all the songs and all the poetry for the doom they now endure without peace, without hope, without end.

**D. Processional.** This is a long, wide hallway containing three **heucuva** (hp 10, 9 (×2)). The heucuva, with the hoods of their tattered robes pulled well forward over their skeletal faces, look remarkably like poor monks solemnly pacing the long corridor. If they become aware of the PCs, they attack immediately and will pursue PCs throughout the complex until either they or the adventurers are destroyed.

The heucuva use the hallway for sham ceremonial marches and processions. Victims of the heucuva are often the centerpieces of these horrid parades. The dead body of a victim is placed in a sedan chair and slowly carried up and down this hallway for several weeks (even low-intelligence undead eventually get bored trundling a corpse about). Leading this atrocity is a heucuva slowly swinging a smoke-belching censor to and fro. The stench from the censer is overwhelming, coming not from

the incense commonly used in religious rites, but from bits of rubbish and locks of the victim's hair.

This abominable ceremony is the heucuva's way of welcoming a new "parishioner" to the congregation. After the ceremony, the body is placed on a prayer rug in the mock altar room (area C). Any PCs falling victim to the heucuva will be subjected to this gruesome ritual.

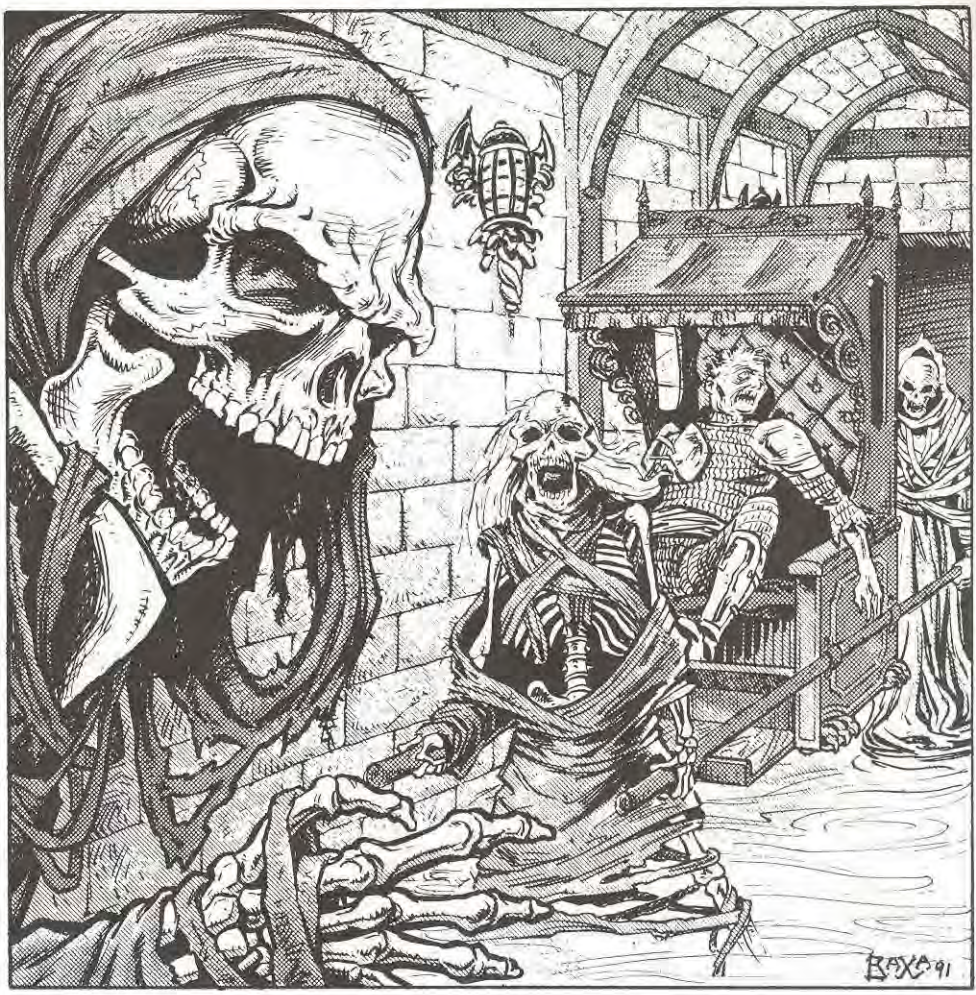
**E. Barracks.** This room is guarded by six zombies. Anyone entering the room is attacked immediately until either the intruders are dead or driven from the room, or the zombies are destroyed. The zombies will not pursue intruders beyond this room. Unless the heucuva in area D have been destroyed or neutralized in some way, the noise caused by fighting with these zombies will bring the heucuva from the processional to investigate in 1-8 rounds.

**Zombies** (6): Int non; AL N; AC 6; MV 6; HD 2; hp 9 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SD immune to mind affecting spells, *death magic,* poisons, and cold-based spells; MR special; SZ M; ML 20; XP 65; MC; brigandine armor.

These zombies were created long ago after Khossack's assassination, when rival factions fought for control of the temple. The PCs have only a 10% chance of mistaking these zombies for heucuva. The zombies were created from the fallen members of the temple guard and still wear their distinctive brigandine armor, which is solid white with the Espruar rune for the letter "O" on the chest. These creatures continue to obey their last orders to defend the room. Unless the noise of combat attracts their attention, the heucuva avoid this room, leaving it to their fellow undead.

This was once the barracks of the temple guard. The majority of the guards died here when the rebel priests attacked with poison gas. The remainder of the guards died in the tower defending the High Priest Min.

The barracks contains 25 cots and 25 locked trunks. The trunks hold moldering blankets, quilts, and other bedclothes, as well as the personal belongings of the guards. Careful searching of the trunks can uncover the following valuables: silver brooch worth 50 gp, ornate pewter beer stein worth 50 gp, silver stick-pin with small ruby head worth 40 gp, two jade bracelets worth 25 gp each. Also hidden in each trunk are the decomposed remains of small leather pouches or wallets containing 10 gp in mixed coins, primarily silver and copper pieces.



**F. Kitchen.** This spacious room was once used to prepare meals for the complex. It is now nothing but a dusty relic of Bard Keep's better days. The room has two large ovens on the east wall and a large fire pit against the south wall. There are two long, narrow food preparation tables running north to south, while a large square butcher's block commands the center of the kitchen.

There is nothing of value to be found in the room other than cooking and eating utensils. Pots, pans, crockery, glassware, and cutlery are everywhere. Some utensils are hanging neatly on racks above the tables and stacked neatly on them, but most are spread in a jumbled, tangled confusion over the floor. If the PCs attempt to explore or move through this room without benefit of a *silence* spell, there is a 25% chance per PC per turn to cause a clattering racket by accidentally kicking or stepping on some of the cookware. Thief characters may either attempt to move silently with normal chances of success or take their chances with the rest of the PCs, but not both.

If the heucuva in areas D and H have not been destroyed or neutralized, any noise emanating from this room attracts their attention, and they arrive to investigate in 1-8 rounds. If a fight breaks out in this room, the noise is deafening. The crash of crockery and clatter of pans, not to mention the sounds of battle, will bring every heucuva in the complex to the kitchen within two turns.

If the PCs attempt to enter or exit through the charred door in the eastern wall of the kitchen, they find it impossible to open. The door hinges are half welded (by the heat of the burning tower) and half rusted (by long years in the weather) into useless hunks of metal. The door must be battered or forced open (10 hp damage), and the noise of forcing the door will bring heucuva to investigate as noted previously.

**G. Larder.** Just off the kitchen, a storage area for foodstuffs is full of bags, boxes, casks, crates, and kegs. Most of the food was taken by the priests when they abandoned the temple. The rest has long since rotted, dried out, and crumbled to dust. There are several very large casks containing ale and wine in the larder, but these libations have long since gone bad. They are all extremely sour and vinegary.

**H. Dining Hall.** This was obviously the dining hall; tables and benches are everywhere. Many of the tables are overturned and some of the benches are smashed to splinters. This is where the orcs in the mock altar room (area C) met their fate. The heucuva have not bothered to repair any of the damage.

There are two **heucuva** (hp 9 each) in the room. They stand behind a table laden with platters and covered dishes, engaged in a grotesque mockery of saying grace or blessing the banquet. The banquet itself is an evil and horrible burlesque of the feasts Bard Keep provided on holy days. The platters contain a reeking mixture of oozy mud and unidentifiable carrion. The covered dishes hold osquip and rat heads, muddy water, dead snakes, and unidentifiable festering goo. If the PCs check closely, they will observe that the platters and covered dishes are, in fact, a solid silver dinner service worth 300 gp. The two heucuva attack immediately once they become aware of intruders.

**I. Meditation Room.** This bare cell was once a meditation chamber used by priests who wanted an hour or two of silent, undisturbed contemplation. The wooden door opens into the room and is standing wide open. As the PCs must walk in single file due to the narrowness of the hallway, only one PC at a time may enter the room. A single **heucuva** (hp 11) hides behind the door and immediately shoves it closed should any PC enter the room. This heucuva can be discovered only after a PC enters the room or by the use of detection spells, such as *detect undead, wizard eye,* etc.

The door locks automatically when closed and can be unlocked only from the inside. The DM may either make this automatic, with the heucuva closing the door and trapping a PC in the room, or allow the PC to roll his dexterity or less on 1d20 with a penalty of +3. If the PC successfully makes the dexterity roll, he is able to dodge out of the room before the door swings shut.

If the PC is trapped in the room with the heucuva, it attacks until either itself or the PC is destroyed. If the PC destroys the heucuva, he can find the key to the door in the creature's robes. If the heucuva kills the PC, it unlocks the door and either attacks anyone still in the hallway or takes the body to the processional (area D) and prepares it to join the congregation.

If PCs outside the room wish to assist the PC in the room, they must somehow get through the wooden door. The DM should treat the door as AC 10, taking 15 hp damage before being knocked down, battered open, burned, etc. The noise of any battering attacks on the door will bring the heucuva from the processional (area D) and the dining hall (area H) to investigate.

**J. Storage.** This room is a jumble of empty crates, boxes, sacks, and bags. When the temple was abandoned, the priests took most of the usable equipment with them. They left behind only some broken tools, a hoe with a broken handle, a broken water clock, and other assorted junk. Also in the room is a small, brightly decorated sedan chair that was once used to carry the high priest during certain ceremonies praising Oghma. Now it is used by the heucuva in more sinister rituals (see area D for details).

**K. Bath.** This was a large communal bathing area for priests and guards. The large pool is 4′ deep and holds about 3′ of murky water. During its glory days, the bath was filled and kept clean by use of *create water* spells. Now the water comes from a large crack in the ceiling of the chamber. The leaky roof allows rain and melting snow to run in almost unhindered and collect in the bathing pool. Because the room is cool and dank, the water evaporates very slowly. The PCs are unable to see beneath the surface of the water, but the pool ripples occasionally as if something is moving below.

The pool hides a horrible secret. During the last days of Bard Keep, when the warring factions were fighting for control, several crawling claws were created from human hands and placed in the pool as a trap. Anyone coming to the pool's edge is surprised by 1-4 crawling claws that leap out of the water (15′ maximum leap) and attack.

A crawling claw, suddenly leaping out of the murky pool, is an extremely startling attack. For the first two rounds of the attack, the PCs must save vs. spells or flee in panic as if affected by a *cause fear* spell. After the initial attack, the claws attack anyone within range but will not pursue intruders beyond the room.

**Crawling claws** (12): Int non; AL N; AC 7; MV 9; HD ½; hp 3 each; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (armored foes) or 1-6 (unarmored foes); SD immune to turning by priests, holy water and *charm, sleep, hold, control undead, death magic,* or *raise dead* spells; edged weapons do half damage; SZ T; ML 20; XP 35; MC. Treat these claws as one "batch" for telepathic communication.

The crawling claws must be destroyed to be removed from victims, due to their strong grip. If an attack against an attached crawling claw misses, another attack roll must be made against the victim's armor class to see if the attack hits the victim instead.

Any PC attacked at the edge of the bathing pool must roll his dexterity or less on 1d20 or fall into the murky water. The bottom of the pool is slimed with algae, and any PC in the pool must roll his dexterity or less on 1d20 every round or slip and fall. The fall causes no damage, but the PC is unable to attack that round. Also, the PC is underwater and must make a dexterity check before he can stand and get his head above water.

The crawling claws prefer victims in the water over all others. For every claw attacking a victim in the water, add a penalty of +1 to the dexterity roll. For example: A PC falls in the pool and is immediately attacked by two crawling claws. The PC must roll his dexterity or less on 1d20 +2 before he can regain his feet. Use the "Holding Your Breath" instructions on page 122 of the *Player's Handbook* to determine how long a PC can remain underwater. Consider the PC to have had one good gulp of air but to be engaged in strenuous activity—attempting to stand while being attacked by crawling claws.

The heucuva avoid this room and will not enter it because of the crawling claws. If the PCs destroy the claws and search the pool, they find two nonanimated skeletons, the remains of priests who decided to take a dip but forgot to

look before they leaped. One skeleton still has a *ring of spell storing* on a fleshless finger. The ring is fully charged and holds the following priest spells: *detect evil, detect poison,* and *detect charm.*

**L. Priests' Quarters.** These eight cubicles are all exactly alike, each containing a cot, a chest, and a small desk and chair. Wandering listlessly through this area are three **heucuva** (hp 10 each). Perhaps they retain dim memories of happier days here—perhaps not. In any case, they attack intruders immediately and will pursue them throughout the complex. If the PCs investigate the chests in the cubicles, they find nothing but tatters and ruins of ceremonial robes, capes, and phylacteries used by the priests of Oghma. The heucuva have ripped, torn, and shredded the robes to ensure the special garments will never be used again.

**M. Library Entrance.** As PCs enter, they can see that this room is completely empty of furnishings or decorations. The only thing in the room is a spiral staircase leading down into a misty gloom. While the heucuva will pursue the PCs into this room, they will not set foot on the staircase or follow the PCs into the room below.

**N. The Null Space.** If the PCs descend the spiral staircase, they quickly pass through the mist and arrive in a room almost identical to area M. This room contains no furnishings or decorations except the spiral staircase rising upward into the mist. This room is, however, larger than the one above. There is a door in the center of each of the four walls (although not all doors lead out of the space; see "Entering the Library").

This room, called the Null Space, is in an extradimensional space. The stairway is a permanent bridge between this space and the Prime Material plane. This means that, while room M never moves and room N is constantly in motion (see "DM Moving the Rooms"), the spiral staircase in room M always leads down to room N, and the staircase in room N always leads up to room M. The actual nexus point between the two planes is somewhere in the misty portion of the staircase. The PCs have no way of affecting or altering the connection between rooms M and N. No changes need be made to spells or magical items because of transplanar travel to and from the Null Space.

## The Library

The library of Bard Keep was once a secret wonder of the North. Each room is an 80′ × 80′ square, with the ceiling 20′ overhead. The library was constructed (using powerful magicks) to allow the rooms to either be bound in place or put into motion. The movement of the rooms was necessary to fulfill two functions. The first was purely defensive: Invaders could be trapped in the library and cut off from reinforcements and supplies. Thus, by judicious use of a special control book governing the movement of the rooms, invaders could be separated from one another or forced into one or two rooms cut off from the rest of the library. When Bard Keep was constructed, the most ardent potential invaders were the barbarians and the orc tribes of the North. Barbarians are notorious for burning books and other products of civilization. Orcs are orcs, whether from north, south, east, or west. Extensive defensive measures were considered necessary to assure the library's survival.

Second, the rooms move because the library was more than just a repository of written knowledge. Several of the rooms were working laboratories in which dangerous experiments or activities went on. Especially unsafe, secret, or weird experiments could be isolated by moving the entire laboratory into a corner of the library. If something went wrong—a dangerous creature got loose, a cloud of poisonous gas was created, an explosion caused an uncontrolled fire, etc.—the entire library was not in jeopardy.

The moving library is not an artifact or relic (see the *DMG,* page 89), but should be treated as such whenever PCs attempt to alter, negate, or destroy the library's magicks.

### Entering the Library

When the PCs first enter the library, the rooms are in the configuration shown in Figure 1. The DM should note that if PCs remain in the Null Space (area N) for one turn, the configuration will change. Consult "DM Moving the Rooms" for details. Once the PCs exit the Null Space into the library proper, they are trapped in the library and must find a way out. The doorways leading from the Null Space into the library appear to be normal doors but act as one-way doors. Once a PC passes through one of these doorways, he cannot return to the Null Space. The PCs must search the library for the way out (see "PCs Moving the Rooms").

The remaining doorways in the library also appear to be normal doors. When the doors of two adjoining rooms are in alignment, they appear to be a single door that PCs may use as a normal door. When the library configuration changes and a door is no longer aligned with one in the room beyond, the door appears as a false door opening onto a blank wall.

There is, however, one exception to the above rule. Doorways at the edges of the square are considered to be in alignment as if the entire library had been rolled into a cylinder (like Pac-Man going out the tunnel to the left and reappearing through the tunnel at the right). This is true for both the top and bottom edges as well as the left and right edges. It could take the PCs some time to figure this out, however, since they may at first believe that all doors at the edges of the square lead nowhere.

**FIGURE 1**

**Starting Configuration of Map Tiles**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | Null Space | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |

### Troubleshooting

In our playtest, Roger's barbarian PC ripped the door off one room and shoved it through the opening sideways. Since this was the "one" door that connected two rooms, we then had an interesting dilemma. What happened to the doorway when the rooms shifted? Here's how we suggest you solve this problem if your PCs are inclined to rip off doors (or wedge them open).

As the rooms begin to shift, the PCs see the open doorway shimmer and cloud over. This shimmering gives six seconds of warning. Any object partway through the doorway when the rooms shift is cut off cleanly, with each section falling into its respective room. Magical items get a save vs. disintegration; if the save is made, the item is "kicked" into one room or the other (50% chance for each).

To avoid a real mess, living beings who are halfway through a doorway are shunted *in toto* to one room or the other. However, a being in this situation must make a system-shock roll to avoid taking 4-24 hp damage. Any items on the being's person go with him, unless something like a sword thrust through a doorway, in which case the item is cut off cleanly as above.

If a door is removed in any way, no new door will ever appear in that position. When the "open" doorway aligns with a door in an adjacent room, people in the room with no door see an open doorway leading into the next room. Anyone in the adjacent room, however, must still open that room's door to step through. In the interesting situation of having PCs in *both* rooms, the ones in the room with the door see the others stepping through the door as if it were an illusion. PCs moving in the opposite direction (those who must open a door), appear from the other side to be miming the opening of a nonexistent door.

You may simply decide to make it impossible for the PCs to remove the doors. A blinding flash of light, an electrical shock, or a *glyph of warding* could protect the doors from any hostile intent.

### DM Moving the Rooms

The various rooms of the library are represented by the colored map tiles provided with this adventure. The number of the room is in the upper right corner of each tile. To orient the direction of the tiles, treat the numbered corner as the northeast corner of the room. Lay out the initial placement of the map tiles according to the configuration shown in Figure 1, then flip all the tiles over left to right to turn them face down (do not allow the PCs to see you set up the rooms). As the PCs enter each room for the first time, turn that tile face up, being sure to keep the room number in the upper right corner. Once a room's tile is turned right-side up, it remains that way for the duration of the game.

The configuration of the rooms shifts every turn. The DM must keep careful track of time in order to move the rooms at the prescribed moment. The Null Space (room N of the Temple) moves about the library at random, causing three other rooms in the same row or column to move each turn. The DM determines the direction in which the Null Space moves by rolling 1d4 and consulting the following:

1 = North
3 = West 4 = East
2 = South

When the Null Space moves, it "pushes" all the rooms ahead of it one square in the direction of movement. The room (including the Null Space) that leaves the square reenters it from the opposite side, going completely "around the block" (see Figure 2).

The Null Space never returns to the location it occupied in the previous turn. This eliminates repetitive, redundant moves such as move north, move south, move north, move south, and so on. The DM ignores rolls calling for a redundant move and rolls again. The movement of the rooms is silent and undetectable to anyone in the rooms.

It is possible that the PC party may be trapped in one, two, or three rooms of the library and forced to wait until the configuration shifts. Once it becomes obvious that random die rolls are going to take a good deal of time before allowing the PCs to exit, the DM should fake a die roll or two. This doesn't mean that the PCs should be rescued or given a free ride by the DM, but there is no point in allowing game mechanics to produce a prolonged dull spot in the adventure. It is always better to have the DM, not the dice, in charge.

### Controlling the Moving Rooms

For PCs to gain control of the moving rooms requires them to find the 16 pages of a special book. Each page of this book is a small, paper-thin metal sheet stamped with one Dethek rune (see the *Cyclopedia of the Realms*, page 8). When the pages are stacked in the proper order, the runes read, "Oghma the Binder." This statement is preceded and followed by the scroll symbol of Oghma (the back and front "covers" of the book), making 16 sheets in all.

He who holds the control book intact is able to control the movement of the library. During the rebellion at Bard Keep, the control book's pages were separated and systematically hidden by one of the nonrebelling priests in order to foil the rebel's plans to control the library. The PCs can find the rune pages by following the logic that the priest used in hiding them. The priest hid the pages by alphabetical association. Thus, the "O" rune page is found in a book entitled *Order of the Open-Eyed Owl* (room 11), the "G" rune page is hidden in a tome entitled *Genealogy of Giants and Giant-kin* (room 5), an "H" rune page can be found in the *History of Halfling Horticulture* (room 12), etc. There are occasional twists on this theme, such as the "N" rune page hidden in *Known Networks of the North* (room 14).

The importance of discovering the alphabetical association will become apparent when the PCs realize that some of the books contain guardians (see "Traps and Guardians"). If the PCs attempt to search through every book for rune pages, they will soon be destroyed by the guardians of the books. The fewer books that the PCs examine, the fewer guardians they will face.

The rune pages do not radiate magic and cannot be detected while a book is closed. Finding a rune page requires only that the PCs leaf through the appropriate book for one round. The pages are found easily once the books are opened. The PCs must translate the runes and determine their proper order on their own. The library is supplied with abundant clues to allow them to accomplish this feat.

Possession of a single rune page, or even 15 of the pages, gives no control over the rooms. All 16 rune pages must be placed in the proper order for the control book to function. Letters appearing more than once, such as the "H" in "Oghma" and "the" or the "E" in "the" and "Binder," are interchangeable.

The book does not have to be bound, nor is there a spell that activates it. When the pages are placed in the proper order between the two covers (the scroll pages), a PC need only speak the words "Oghma the Binder," and the book is operational. Once the book is functional, a PC need only touch the top, bottom, left, or right side of a page to make the corresponding room move north, south, west, or east respectively.

The first page of the book, the "O" rune, controls the Laboratory Storage room (room 1), the second or "G" rune page controls the Meeting Room (room 2), and so on. The Library Storage room (room 15) is controlled by the back cover of the book, the scroll symbol of Oghma.

With the control book, the PCs may make repetitive, redundant moves if they wish. To stop the library rooms from moving and to lock the library into a particular configuration, the control book need only be closed. In addition, when the control book is closed, the library and the Null Space are brought into phase with each other and it is possible to exit the library and enter the Null Space.

To allow the library rooms to move at random, the control book need only be left open and untouched for one turn (or disassembled, as is its present condition). If the complete control book is taken from the library, the library remains in permanent lock-down mode until the control book is returned. Open or closed, the control book has no effect on the library once it is taken outside the library.

The DM should hand the players the cardboard token (from the room tile insert) for the appropriate rune whenever the PCs find a page of the control book (see Figure 3). The location of each page is noted in the room descriptions.

### Traps and Guardians

The books of the library contain a number of traps and guardians. The traps were meant to discourage those without authorization from using the books. These traps are generally spells used for such purposes, such as *sepia snake sigil, explosive runes,* and *glyph of warding.* Many books trapped with these spells are books endorsed or sponsored by a guild. The guilds trapped the books because they contained what were trade secrets 100 years ago. The guilds allowed the priests of Oghma to use these books under the condition these trade secrets could not be divulged without guild permission. Instructions for avoiding these traps are long-since lost, having died with the priests of Bard Keep. The traps are always triggered by anyone leafing through the books. The control book has no effect on these spell-trapped books.

Book guardians are of a different sort, as they actually protect the books and preserve them. Oghma is called "The Binder" because he can force creatures from the outer planes into special prisons of his own design, in which the creatures remain captive until released. The exact nature and operation of Oghma's prisons are known only to Oghma. In the case of the library, the books themselves are the special prisons.

Creatures from the Nine Hells called abishai (see sidebar for details) have been bound into some of the books to become the preservers, protectors, and prisoners of the tomes. When a PC opens or attempts to use a book, he releases the creature protecting it. As the same creature always guards a particular book, most sages assume that the creature is in *temporal stasis* on some other plane and is released from stasis and *gated* to the area of the book when it is opened. Only the creature imprisoned in a volume may use this *gate.* Neither PCs, NPCs, nor anything else can pass the *gate* or be drawn through it. (The DM may also take note of the Scalmagdrion on page 90 of the *DM's Sourcebook of the Realms* as another example of how book guardians work.)

The abishai bound to a particular book suddenly appears and attacks the character who opened the book until either the abishai or the character is destroyed. The guardian abishai attacks only the person who opened the book. It always attacks in self defense and always attacks anyone coming between it and its prey. The abishai appears in 0-9 (1d10 – 1) rounds, zero meaning the abishai appears instantly when the book is opened. The few rounds of delay is a deliberate ploy used to lull victims into a false sense of security.

A guardian will not normally leave the room in which its book is found, but it will pursue ceaselessly if a fleeing character is still in possession of the book. Due to the abishai's ability to *teleport,* it can still pursue even if cut off for a moment by a sudden shifting of the rooms. If the person who opened the book is destroyed, the abishai closes the book and places it back in the place where it belongs. The guardian then instantly returns (if it is not being attacked) to its imprisonment.

Books opened using tools, such as a 10' pole, tongs, or similar devices, are treated as if opened by hand. The guardians of books opened by spells, such as *unseen servant, telekinesis,* etc., or by conjured, *summoned,* or *charmed* beings, will attack the spell-caster not the opener. NPCs opening guarded books are attacked as PCs (unless under the influence of a *charm, suggestion,* or other spell). This makes it difficult to use NPCs to open books more than once. A guarded book that is knocked off a shelf, either accidentally or purposely,

## FIGURE 2 Moving the Tiles

**1 = North, 2 = South, 3 = West, 4 = East**

**Example:**
**Roll of 3 on 1d4**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 9 | 10 | Null Space | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| 10 | Null Space | 11 | 9 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 |

## FIGURE 3
### Rune Pages of the Control Book

has a 50% chance of opening. If the book opens, the guardian will attack the individual who knocked the book off.

Once the PCs are aware of the guardians, they can judge the type of abishai protecting a particular book by the color of its cover: A book with a green jacket is protected by a green abishai, a black jacket has a black abishai guardian, etc.

There is no way of distinguishing a guarded book from an unguarded one until after the book is opened. A thief's ability to find and remove traps is completely ineffective in locating or removing the abishai guardians. A *find traps* spell reveals an abishai-guarded tome only if cast after the book is opened. If the abishai-guarded book is closed, the spell reveals nothing because the trap, in fact, does not exist on the Prime Material plane until the book is opened. Naturally, not all books are trapped, and not all pages from the control book are protected by an abishai. Also, some books have guardians other than abishai, such as guardian daemons.

**Guardian daemon** (least): Int 9; AL N; AC 3; MV 9; HD 6; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-10/1-10; SA breath weapon for 3-18 hp damage; SD immune to *charm, sleep, hold, polymorph,* and *fear* spells; SZ variable; ML 14; XP 2,000; MC.

A book guardian (abishai or daemon) can be *abjured, plane shifted, banished,* or driven away by a *holy word, limited wish,* or *wish* spell after it has been released. These spells send the creature back into imprisonment and not back to its original plane. However, such spells should be beyond the capabilities of the PCs taking part in this adventure.

The guards and guardians of the library are, like the rooms themselves, governed by the control book. The floor of each room is etched with portion of the scroll symbol of Oghma. If the rooms are moved into proper alignment so that the symbol of Oghma is created by the library (see Figure 4) and the control book is then closed, all book guardians are locked into their tomes and will not be released when the books are opened or used.

Guarded books taken from the library can no longer be affected by the control book. The guardian will issue forth and attack every time the book is opened. These guardians are still subject to *abjure, plane shift,* and *holy word* spells whether in the library or not.

### Treasure

The treasure of Bard Keep's library is the wealth of books and written material to be found there. Most of the books and tomes in the library are large, weighty, cumbersome texts written on loose sheets bound between leather, wooden, or metal covers. Some books are of a finer sort, their pages sewn in place. The majority of the books and tomes are nonmagical in nature. Each book in the library is worth at least 5 gp. If a book is otherwise useless, this is the gp amount of paper, papyrus, or parchment that can be salvaged from it.

The DM has the option of allowing the books to have actual value to the PCs rather than just resale value. For books such as *Giants and Giant-kin* (room 5), *Behavior of Beholders and Beholder-kin* (room 5), or *Elves, Elvenkind, and Evermeet* (room 14), the DM may allow the PCs to read headings of the same name in the *Monstrous Compendium* or *Cyclopedia of the Realms.* The PCs can then use this information in later adventures. The DM may also allow PCs to gain an additional nonweapon proficiency by studying such books as *Jewel and Gem Cutting* (room 5) or *Weaponsmithing* (room 4), or an additional language using one of the language dictionaries in room 10. In any case, these books can be used profitably only after the PCs have returned to Silverymoon or some other safe haven where they have the time to study and practice. The DM can curb overuse of any "book learning" by requiring the PC to make an intelligence check to determine if the character remembers the relevant information from what he has read. Please note: The player is not the character. What the player knows or remembers is of no consequence.

### Key to the Library Rooms

**1. Laboratory Storage.** This room contains row after row of shelves holding all manner of containers: boxes, bottles, bags, jars, jugs, etc. The containers are well marked and, while much of the stuff has long-since evaporated or moldered away to nothing, many containers still hold useful substances. There are also a number of common laboratory instruments on the shelves: scalpels, scales, beakers, test tubes, tweezers, tongs, etc. Collectively, the instruments are worth 1,000 gp but weigh approximately 100 lbs.

H H

G O

A M

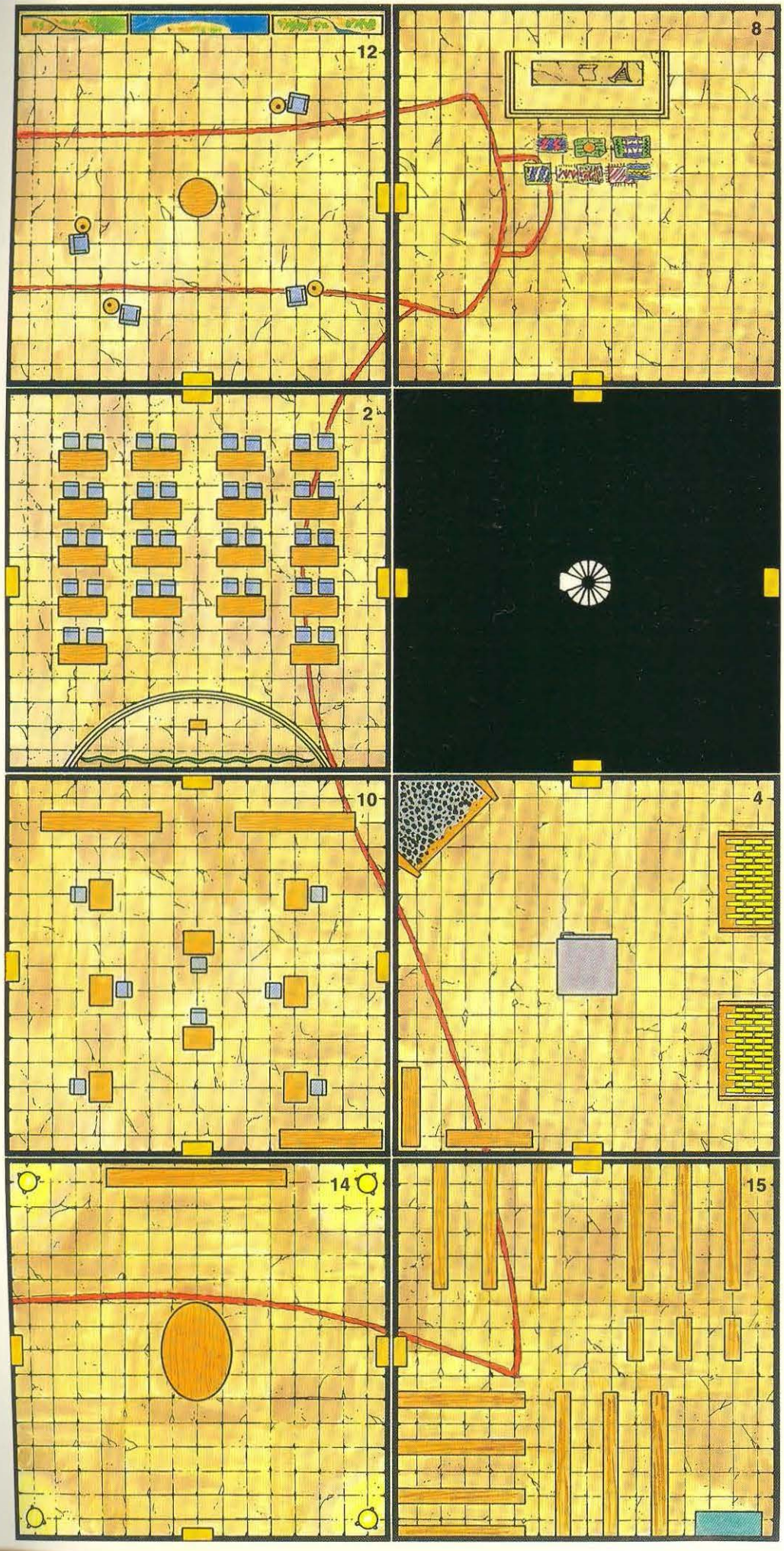
B T

E E

D N

I R

1
13
9
11
3
7
5
6

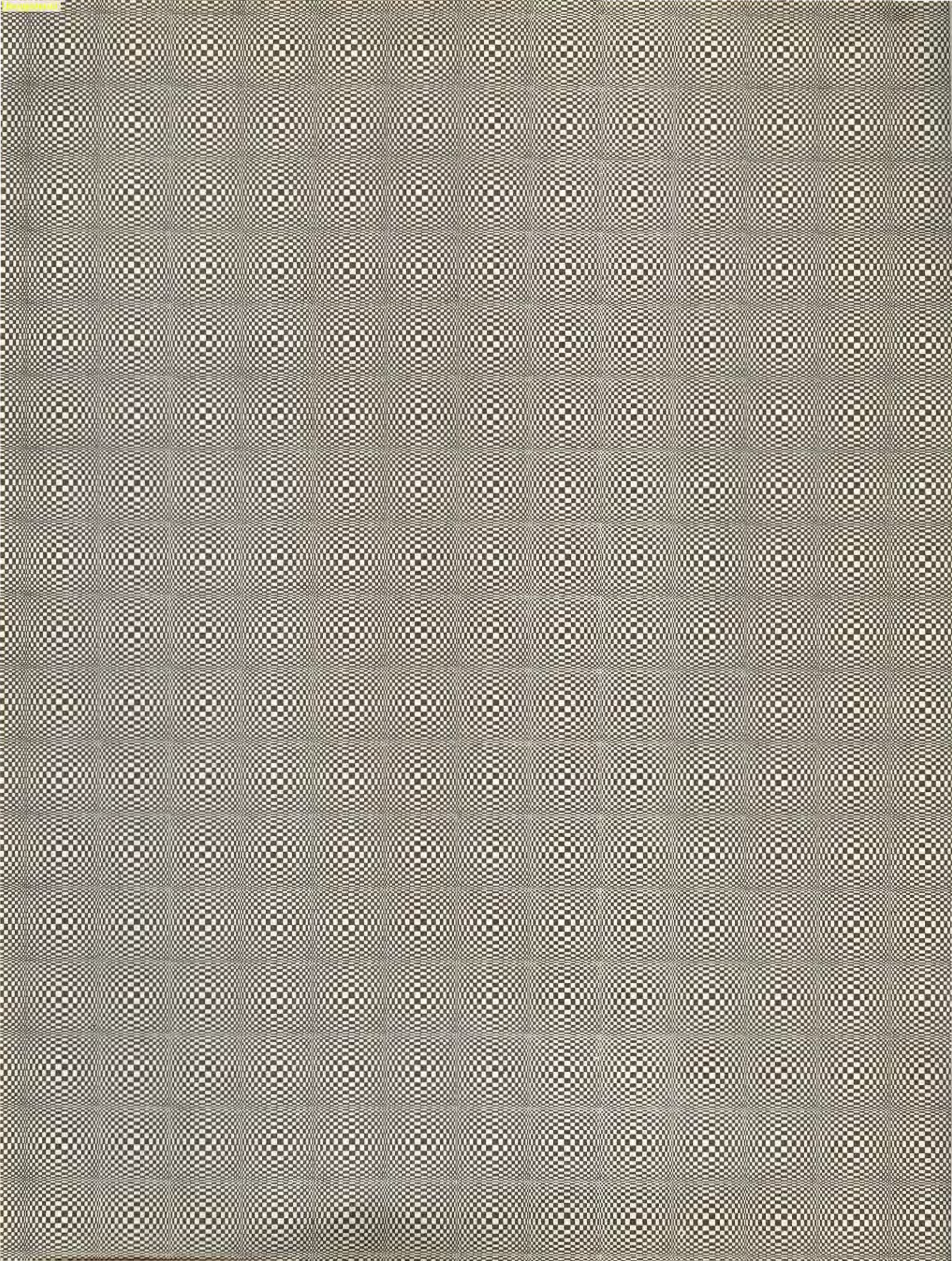



Carefully pry open the staples and remove these cardstock pages from the magazine. Then reclose the staples to preserve your copy of DUNGEON® Adventures.

Using a metal straightedge and a sharp hobby knife or single-edge razor blade, carefully cut apart the 16 square map rooms that make up the library of Bard Keep. Cut between the solid black lines and all the way around the outside of the map. This will also separate the smaller squares that represent the rune pages of the control book.

Before the players arrive, the map tiles should be arranged as shown in Figure 1 (page 33). After all the rooms are in place, flip over each tile so that only the backs of the tiles are showing. (The DM can peek under the tiles to confirm the presence of doorways in adjacent room. Just make sure that the players don't peek, too.) As the PCs enter each room, turn over that room's tile, keeping all the room numbers in the upper right-hand corner. Once a room has been turned right-side up, it remains that way throughout the adventure.

Each square on a map tile is equal to a 5′×5′ area in the room it represents. Each room in the library is 80′×80′ square.



On the north wall of the room is a large locked cabinet. The lock is not trapped but is intricate and difficult. A thief attempting to pick this lock receives a −10% penalty to his open-locks ability. The cabinet holds 25 sturdy, wide-mouthed ceramic jugs. All are stoppered with heavy corks and sealed thoroughly with wax because their contents react in some volatile way if exposed to air. Each container is marked with a large red Dethek "D" rune that can be translated by spell, a thief's ability to read languages, or knowledge of the Dethek alphabet. This was once a common alchemical mark denoting dangerous or unstable contents. If a PC opens one of the marked containers, roll 2d8 and consult the "Laboratory Storage" sidebar. If the PCs batter the cabinet open, they have a 50% chance of breaking 1-4 jugs. Roll 2d8 for each broken jug and consult the sidebar.

On the top shelf of the cabinet are five books. *Chemical and Alchemical Studies, Elven Weights and Measures, The Complete Laboratory,* and *Alchemist's Handbook* are not trapped or guarded and are worth 50 gp each. The fifth volume has a black cover and is titled *Everyday Experimental Equipment.* It contains a **black abishai** (hp 25) and an "E" rune page from the control book. It is possible, through mishandling of the jugs, to destroy the books or the entire cabinet, but the rune page will survive all *fireballs* or acidic goos.

**2. Meeting Room.** The room gives the impression of a classroom or lecture hall. There are several tables and chairs throughout the room. At the southern end of the room is a dias and lectern. This was a discussion room wherein mages, sages, and clerics could present the results of their various experiments and studies to their colleagues. On the southern wall of the room is a large, colorful tapestry (worth 50 gp) depicting Bard Keep as it appeared in its glory days.

**3. Music Room.** This room contains all sorts of musical instruments: lutes, harps, chimes, recorders, flutes, drums, bells, and cymbals. The instruments are rather plain and well used, for they belonged to the library rather than to individuals. The entire collection can be sold for 1,000 gp.

Against the north wall is a large

## Abishai

(Lesser Baatezu)

| | Black | Green | Red |
|---|---|---|---|
| CLIMATE/TERRAIN: | The Nine Hells | | |
| FREQUENCY: | Very rare (other planes), Common (Nine Hells) | | |
| ORGANIZATION: | Solitary | | |
| ACTIVITY CYCLE: | Any | | |
| DIET: | Carnivore | | |
| INTELLIGENCE: | Average (8-10) | | |
| TREASURE: | Nil | | |
| ALIGNMENT: | Lawful evil | | |
| NO. APPEARING: | 2-20 | 2-8 | 1 |
| ARMOR CLASS: | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| MOVEMENT: | 9, fly 12 (C) | | |
| HIT DICE: | 4+1 | 5+2 | 6+3 |
| THACO: | 17 | 15 | 13 |
| NO. OF ATTACKS: | 3 | | |
| DAMAGE/ATTACK: | 1-4/1-4/2-5 | | |
| SPECIAL ATTACKS: | Poison, spells, dive | | |
| SPECIAL DEFENSES: | +1 or better weapon to hit; see text for more | | |
| MAGIC RESISTANCE: | 30% | | |
| SIZE: | L (8') | L (7') | M (6') |
| MORALE: | Average (8-10) | Average (8-10) | Steady (11-12) |
| XP VALUE: | 21,500 | 23,500 | 25,500 |

The abishai populate the first and second layers of the Nine Hells. They appear as gothic gargoyles with small horns, snaky hair, fangs, pointed ears, leathery wings, barbed tails, hard scaled hides, and reptilian feet. Abishai use *telepathy* to understand and converse with any intelligent creature. Although they do not value treasure, abishai occasionally (15%) have Q-type treasure that they are guarding or taking to a more powerful being.

**Combat:** In hand-to-hand combat, all abishai use their claws and tail stingers; each stinger also injects poison that causes death if a saving throw vs. poison is failed. They can also fly high into the air, then dive at opponents to strike with both claws; this gains a +2 bonus to hit, with double damage (2-8/2-8) if the attack succeeds. Abishai regenerate 1 hp per round unless struck by holy water or holy magical weapons. All abishai are immune to fire-based attacks and poison, and take only half damage from gas- and cold-based attacks. A vial of holy water does 2-8 hp damage to them.

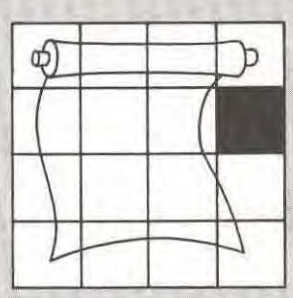
Abishai can use the following spell-like powers, one at a time, once per round: *advanced illusion, animate dead, cause fear, change self, charm person, command, infravision, produce flame, pyrotechnics, scare, suggestion, teleport without error.* All spell-like powers are used as if they were spells of the same name cast at the 8th level of ability. *Teleport without error* is treated as an innate ability. In addition, all abishai have the ever-active ability to discern the alignment of any being (as per a *know alignment* spell). Each abishai can also attempt to *gate* in assistance once per day; in this module, there is a 30% chance of getting 1-3 other abishai per attempt.

**Habitat/Society:** The abishai are cruel and vicious creatures. When encountered in groups, they follow a simple order of existence, with the stronger dominating and exploiting the weaker. Abishai have little chance to form any sort of lasting societal structure of their own as they are so heavily exploited by the more powerful creatures of their plane. To survive, they must conform to whatever dictates their masters hand down. Abishai are used primarily as slave labor and as battle fodder in the everlasting conflicts between the warring powers in the Nine Hells and those in the Abyss. They delight in tormenting less-powerful natives of the Hells, as well as all non-baatezu intruders.

**Ecology:** Abishai are created from lesser baatezu that have distinguished themselves in some manner in the endless wars of the Nine Hells. In turn, abishai that show distinction may themselves be "promoted" by being changed into more powerful baatezu. The main body of many a large army in the Nine Hells is composed of abishai.

**FIGURE 4 Symbol of Oghma**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 13 | 12 | 8 |
| 9 | 11 | 2 | Null Space |
| 3 | 7 | 10 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 14 | 15 |



bellows-powered organ worth 1,200 gp. The organ must be disassembled before it can be removed from the library, but there is a 25% chance that the instrument will be damaged while being taken apart and cannot be reassembled properly. This renders the organ unplayable and worthless. Any PC with engineering proficiency may make a proficiency check to reduce the chance of damaging the organ to 5%.

The room is soundproof. Thieves cannot detect noise outside of this room or, if outside, cannot detect noise by listening at the door. In the southeast corner is a bookcase with 11 books. Ten of the books are standard reference works on music: *Dwarven Tempo and Improvisation, Elven Tempo and Improvisation, Halfling Tempo and Improvisation* is a three volume set worth 200 gp as a set but only 50 gp each if sold individually. Some of the other books available here are *Heroic Ballads, Marches and Martial Music, Orcish Percussion Technique, Dirges and Funeral Overtures, Melody and Harmony, Acoustics,* and *Madrigals.* Unless stated otherwise, the books are not trapped and are worth 25 gp each. Mixed in with the reference works is a book entitled *Musical Masterpieces of Myth Drannor,* worth 150 gp. The book is bound in green leather and contains the "M" rune page from the control book. It is guarded by a **green abishai** (hp 30).

**4. Metallurgy Laboratory.** A large kiln dominates the center of the room. A permanent *phase door* in the chimney of the kiln sends most of the heat and smoke elsewhere, but the PCs are unable to use this *phase door* as an exit.

The laboratory was used for smelting, refining, and manufacturing new metal alloys. In the northwest corner is a bin holding coal for firing the kiln. Along the eastern wall are bins holding ingots primarily of common metals or alloys such as tin, iron, lead, brass, and bronze. By carefully searching for 2-8 turns, the PCs can find 10 large copper ingots worth 10 gp each, three small bars of electrum worth 20 gp each, and one gold ingot worth 100 gp. The PCs can also find four small but extremely heavy ingots of silver. These ingots are actually made of "heavy metal," that is, metal magically compressed and compacted to one-tenth its normal size. If resmelted, the silver ingots decompress and expand into 200 gp worth of silver each.

There are also three ingots of a metal that glows a soft blue color and radiates magic. These ingots are a special metal that can be made into a +1 weapon, and are worth 200 gp each. There is enough of this special metal to make either a *short sword +1,* two *daggers +1,* a *spear +1,* or an *axe +1.* However, the cost of making such weapons is high, and the PCs must first find a weaponsmith capable of making such things (proficiency in weaponsmithing gives a 50% chance of success in smelting; an additional proficiency in spellcraft increases this chance to 90%). The material is rendered useless in less capable hands.

Also in the room is what appears to be a normal human-sized suit of chain mail armor. The armor is nonmagical but is made of a special lightweight metal alloy that retains the normal AC rating for chain mail but causes no encumbrance penalties to any kind of movement. The armor is not *elven chain mail.* It cannot be worn secretly under clothing, and all class restrictions concerning armor apply. The special armor is worth 150 gp.

In the southwest corner of the room are several bookshelves holding a multivolume set of the *Encyclopedia of Metallurgy.* The encyclopedia is not trapped or guarded, and consists of nine copper-bound volumes worth 300 gp as a set or 10 gp each. The shelves also contain 12 reference volumes on metallurgy. Seven of the books: *Weaponsmithing, Smelting, Casting, Gnomish Hand-Firing Techniques, Metal Sculpture, Armor Through the Ages,* and *Bronze Methodology* are untrapped, unguarded, and worth 25 gp each. Two of the volumes are trapped: *Hephaestus, God of Blacksmiths* contains a *glyph of warding* that paralyzes for 2d6 +12 hours anyone opening the book without first saying the name Hephaestus. The volume entitled *Dwarven Forging* contains *explosive runes.* These two books are now out of date and worth only 50 gp each.

There are also three volumes with guardians: a red-bound tome entitled *Amn's Arms and Armor* contains a **red abishai** (hp 33) and the "A" rune page from the library's control book. A large book bound in natural leather entitled *Dwarven Weaponsmithing* contains a *guardian daemon* (hp 27), and a black-bound book entitled *Elven Metallurgy—Myth or Magic?* contains a **black abishai** (hp 23). All three books are very rare and worth 100 gp each.

**5. Reading Room.** This is one of the main reading rooms of the library. The room is well lighted by a *continual light* spell cast upon the ceiling. On the southern wall is a large bookcase holding 27 volumes that comprise a set of primitive encyclopedias. The books are untitled but are numbered. Each volume represents one letter of the alphabet, with the 27th volume being the index to the set. The set is unguarded and untrapped. As a set, the books are worth 600 gp, but they are worth only 10 gp each if sold individually.

Down the center of the room is a long table with 12 chairs. Books lie on the table in front of 11 of the chairs. Three of the books lie open while the other eight are closed. The three open books all deal with either mathematics or geometry. They are untrapped, unguarded, and worth 10 gp each. The eight closed books are:

*Notes on Magic.* This has a shiny metal cover with the title etched into its surface. It is a reference work detailing

the material components required for wizard spells but does not contain any other information concerning the spells. At the time the library acquired this volume, it was still considered a secret document, so it contains a *sepia snake sigil.* The tome has long-since become a standard reference book and is worth only 10 gp.

*Behavior of Beholders and Beholder-kin.* This book has a black cover and is untrapped, unguarded, and worth 100 gp. It contains the "B" rune page of the control book.

*Rangers of the Realms.* Bound in natural leather, this book contains short biographies of various rangers who lived in the north of the Forgotten Realms some 200 years ago. It is unguarded, untrapped, and worth only 10 gp because it is so out of date.

*Behavior of Insects, Vol I.* This is an untrapped and unguarded book with a green cover (but no abishai). It deals with normal (small) insect behavior.

*Behavior of Insects, Vol II.* This book is exactly as Volume I, but it deals with giant insect behavior.

*Behavior of Insects, Vol III.* This is exactly like Volumes I and II, but it deals with the behavior of magically created insects (*insect plague, creeping doom,* etc.). As a set, these three volumes are worth 150 gp, but they can be sold separately for only 20 gp each.

*Giants and Giant-kin.* This book is bound in a red cover, and it deals with various races of giants and giant-kin. It is worth 100 gp but contains a **red abishai** (hp 35). The book also contains the "G" rune page.

*Jewel and Gem Cutting.* This book is bound in a copper jacket. It was donated to the library by the Jewelers Guild of Waterdeep and details a number of trade secrets in the art of cutting and setting precious gems. It is worth 250 gp, but a jeweler or thieves guild will pay twice that amount for the book. The book is trapped with *explosive runes.* If the runes are detonated, the copper jacket acts as shrapnel and does an additional 1-4 hp damage to the reader only.

**6. Hydroponic Garden.** Upon entering this room, the PCs may think they have been *teleported* or have somehow escaped from the library. This is a specially designed conservatory and garden built into the library, a place where the sages and priests could stretch their legs and get some fresh air without the necessity of leaving the library.

There are *permanent illusions* on all four walls and the ceiling. The walls depict a beautiful expanse of blue-green ocean as far as the eye can see. The ceiling appears as a brilliant blue tropical sky on a spring day. The sun moves up the eastern wall, across the ceiling, and down the western wall. Just as the last light of the sun disappears, a full moon rises and lights the room with a soft, pale yellow light. The moon follows the sun and crosses from east to west. As the last light of the moon disappears, the sun rises and the cycle begins again. The illusions make the room appear to be a tropical island. The PCs can hear the waves breaking on the shore and the occasional cry of a gull. The air feels warm and balmy.

The room is a self-contained ecosystem full of plant life. The illusory sun and moon are actually a variant of the *continual light* spell and provide light for the plants, many of which are dangerous. When Bard Keep was thriving, the dangerous plants were used for potions, study, and experimentation.

The plants grow not in dirt but in large ceramic tanks filled with water. The tanks of water are kept at a constant level, never overflowing and never drying up, by perfectly balanced *create water* and *destroy water* spells. The spells are permanent and keep a constant supply of clean water available for the plants. The surface of the water in each tank is covered with a thick blanket of gray-green scum. As the plants die, they fall into the tanks and decay, supplying nutrients for the next generation. The PCs may drink water from the tanks without fear of harmful side effects. A *destroy water* spell cast on the water in the tanks will upset the delicate spell balance and lower the water level by 25%, but it will take several weeks for the plants in a tank to die even if all the water is destroyed.

The priests tended the room, cutting the plant life back, placing nutrients in the tanks, keeping any dangerous plants dormant until needed, and maintaining safe passages through the foliage. Unattended since the rebellion, the room is now lush and completely overgrown with plant life. The tanks have no edible plants but do contain many harmless but entangling plants such as vines, creepers, and ivies. These plants slow the party's progress and make it

**Laboratory Storage**

Roll 2d8

| | |
|---|---|
| **2** | The jar's contents evaporate instantly into a 10′ × 10′ cloud. Anyone within the cloud must save vs. poison or take 3-18 hp damage. A saving throw reduces damage to 1-6. The cloud dissipates in one turn. |
| **3** | The jar's contents immediately begin to sparkle and glitter, then explode in a blinding flash. Everyone within a 20′ radius must save vs. poison or be blinded for 2d10 + 24 hours. A saving throw negates the effect. |
| **4-5** | The contents instantly bubble up over the side of the open jar. Anyone holding the container must make a dexterity check or be splashed with the sudsy liquid, causing the PC's skin, from head to foot, to turn bright green (or any bizarre color the DM wishes). Otherwise, the stuff has no harmful effects and the PC's skin color returns to normal in 1d6 + 6 weeks. |
| **6-7** | The contents immediately shrivel into a hard, wrinkled little ball with no adverse effects. |
| **8-12** | The jar appears to hold only dust, dirt of sand. Whatever chemical was once stored here has become completely inert over the years. |
| **13-14** | The jar's contents evaporate instantly with a loud sizzling and popping sound into billowing, nauseous fumes. Treat as a *stinking cloud* spell with a duration of three turns. |
| **15** | The contents erupt violently into bubbling goo. Anyone holding the container must make a dexterity check with a penalty of +3 or be splashed with the acidic substance for 2-8 hp damage per round. The goo is very sticky but can be washed off with water or alcohol. |
| **16** | The jar's contents immediately explode in a *fireball* (no saving throw). The person opening the container takes 3-18 hp in blast and fire damage, and anyone within 10′ of the container takes 1-6 hp fire damage. |

necessary to hack a pathway through the room. Until paths have been cleared, the base movement rate for the party is reduced to half normal. In addition, the portion of the symbol of Oghma etched into the floor cannot be seen until the plant life is cleared away.

The room contains five hydroponic tanks, one in each corner and one in the center of the room. The dangerous plants in the tanks tend to be stunted and smaller than those found in the wild, as they have had to sustain themselves without the usual supply of protein supplements (victims). The tanks contain the following dangerous plants:

**Choke creepers:** Int non; AL N; AC 6 (vine), 5 (stalk); MV ½; HD 25; THACO 7; #AT 8+; Dmg 1-4; SA strangulation; SD immune to torch-sized fires; SZ G; ML 14; XP 18,000; MC (Plant, Carnivorous). These huge vines are twisted and curled in and around the tanks.

**Mantrap:** Int non; AL N; AC 6; MV nil; HD 4; THACO nil; #AT 2; Dmg special; SZ L (16′); ML 12; XP 270; MC (Plant, Carnivorous).

This carnivorous plant was originally housed in a large airtight glass enclosure to ensure the plant's dangerous pollen could not attract victims. Over the years, it has outgrown the enclosure and pushed out most of the glass. When the PCs encounter the mantrap, it is fully as dangerous as any of its cousins found in the wild.

**Giant sundew:** Int semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 1; HD 8; THACO 12; #AT 6 per target; Dmg 1-3; SA suffocation; SD victim suffers attack roll penalty; SZ M; ML 11; XP 2,000; MC (Plant, Carnivorous).

This plant is able to move slowly from tank to tank. The DM has the option of moving the plant to a new location for each encounter.

**Tri-flower frond:** Int non; AL N; AC 9; MV nil; HD 2+8; THACO 16; #AT 2-8; Dmg special; SZ M (5′-8′); ML 10; XP 175; MC (Plant, Carnivorous). These grow freely throughout the room.

**Obliviax:** Int average; AL NE; AC 10; MV nil; HD 1-2 hp; THACO 20; #AT nil; Dmg nil; SA steal memories; SD can cast stolen spells; SZ T (6″ square); ML 9; XP 35; MC.

The moss coexists well with the choke creepers. When the two are found together, the moss immediately attacks any victims of the creeper.

**Yellow musk creeper:** Int non; AL N; AC 7; MV nil; HD 3; THACO 17; #AT 2-12; Dmg special; SA gas; SZ L (20′ square); ML 20; XP 650; MC.

These grow freely throughout the room. Unless a PC or NPC falls victim to one of these creepers, there are no yellow musk zombies.

Due to the riotous profusion of plant life in the room, it is impossible to tell dangerous plants from harmless ones (until they attack, of course). As the PCs make their way through the garden room, use Figure 5 to note the locations of dangerous plants. If the PCs come within range of two or more plants, whether of the same type or two or more varieties, the plants attack simultaneously. The tanks hold:

**Center tank.** Tri-flower fronds (2): hp 17 each; Yellow Musk Creeper (3): hp 14 each; Mantrap: hp 18.

**Northeast tank.** Choke creeper (80′ stalk, 32 vines): hp 100 stalk, 8 vines; Obliviax: hp 2.

**Northwest tank.** Tri-flower fronds (5): hp 17 each; Yellow musk creeper: hp 14.

**Southeast tank.** Tri-flower fronds (2): hp 17 each; Yellow Musk Creeper (3): hp 14 each; Giant Sundew: hp 28.

**Southwest tank.** Choke creeper (100′ stalk, 40 vines); hp 125 (stalk), 10 (vines).; Obliviax: hp 2.

**7. Librarians' Quarters.** These are the private chambers for the librarians. As the library was open 24 hours a day, four librarians worked six-hour shifts each while the fifth took the day off. This gave each librarian time to eat, sleep, and pursue his own endeavors.

There is a bed, a nightstand, a large wardrobe, and a large trunk for each librarian. There is nothing in or on the beds. Each nightstand contains several candles, and the one in the center of the west wall holds a wooden scroll tube containing the priest spell *command.* The wardrobes hold the remains of clothes, ceremonial gear, and vestments worn by the priests Oghma. The trunks contain only blankets, quilts, and other bedclothes that have long since rotted into an indistinguishable mass.

In the center of the room is a large table and five chairs. Sitting at the table are the skeletal remains of a priest named Dheitrich, the very one who hid the control book's pages. The robed and hooded figure looks remarkably like one of the heucuva of the tem-

ple, but any attack by the PCs immediately reveals the skeleton's harmless, nonanimate nature.

In the remnants of the priest's rotting robes, the PCs can find a cover of the control book and a small book entitled *Dheitrich's Diary* that is filled with the priest's mundane activities and private thoughts. The diary is trapped with a *glyph of warding* that will blind anyone triggering it for 2d12 + 24 hours. The last few entries confirm the sad history of Bard Keep. When the diary is discovered and examined, the DM should read the following entries to the players:

> Uktar the 11th: All is woe! Khossack has been acting strangely lately. He has been talking to the acolytes a great deal. I have heard whispers that he is a heretic, that he speaks blasphemy. I cannot believe it. My heart is aching.
>
> Uktar the 12th: All is madness! The brothers of the temple are at war with each other. Khossack claims to be the rightful high priest. He has rallied many followers to his cause and intends to seize the temple. Min, the high priest, did everything in his power to avoid this violence, but to no avail.
>
> Uktar the 13th: All is lost! Min has set the tower ablaze, attempting to destroy the temple rather than allow it to fall to the heretics. I have escaped here to the library. I will not let this accumulated knowledge fall to Khossack and his pirates. I have driven all from the library and have unbound the book controlling the rooms. The shifting rooms that I love shall be my tomb. I have hidden the 16 pages of the control book, page by page. I hope one day the temple will be cleansed and the library opened again. May Oghma the Binder damn Khossack and his followers.

The entry for Uktar the 13th is the last entry in the diary. There is no record of Dheitrich's lonely death. As a clue to the whereabouts of the other rune pages of the control book, the priest has placed the "D" rune page in his diary.

**8. Altar/Meditation Room.** This is another altar room much like area C of the temple above, but this room is the real thing and not a horrid heucuva imitation. There are several prayer rugs on the floor and a large stone table on a raised dias. On the stone table are a large symbol of Oghma and a harp.

A bard and his associates sent by the Halls of Inspiration to intercept the PCs have taken up residence in this room. The bard is under orders from the Inspired Ones to keep the PCs out of Bard Keep. What the Inspired Ones do not know is that the bard and his companions are members of the Zhentarim, an evil organization dedicated to making itself rich by any means (see *Cyclopedia of the Realms* pages 92-93).

**Kandrak Kandrakson:** AL NE; AC 4; MV 12; B8; hp 29; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; PP 45%, DN 40%, CW 80%, RL 45%; ML 12; XP 2,000; chain mail, long sword, dagger, five darts, *cloak of protection +1, potion of extra-healing;* spells: *armor, comprehend languages, read magic, ESP, invisibility, knock, suggestion.*

While only a low-level member, Kandrak's allegiance is decidedly with the Zhentarim. He is calculating and ruthless but, like all bards, he can be a smooth talker when he turns on the charm. Kandrak carries a lute and uses it as often as possible to influence friends and foes. He always weighs risks against rewards before joining any endeavor. In battle, he attempts to inspire his companions as much as possible before joining the fight himself, but he does this only to ensure victory, not to help his companions. As far as Kandrak is concerned, his companions are expendable.

The bard's plans are much different than those which the Halls of Inspiration hired him to pursue. Kandrak thought he was in a no-lose situation. He planned to enter Bard Keep and recover as many books as possible before the PC party arrived. He could then let whatever monsters inhabited the temple weaken the adventuring party before he and his companions finished off any survivors. If successful, he would return to Silverymoon and collect his reward from the Temple of Oghma. In addition, he would have the books and tomes from the Library to turn over to the Zhentarim. If he could not destroy or drive off the PC party, he still had the books. Either way he came out a winner.

At first, Kandrak's plans went well. He and his companions avoided the heucuva in the temple by using *invisibility to undead* spells from scrolls, and they found the library with little trouble. Unfortunately, Kandrak had not foreseen the possibility of a library from which he could not escape. He now waits in the altar room with his companions, trying to discover a way out.

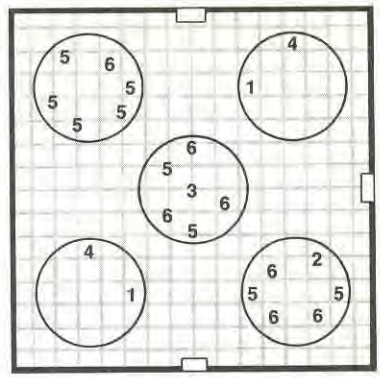
**Shaglin Wert:** AL CN; AC 8; MV 12; T5; hp 18; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; PP 45%, OL 39%, FT 25%, MS 34%, HS 30%, DN 34%, CW 77%, RL 16%; ML 9; XP 175; leather armor, short sword, knife, 12 darts.

**Toggle Northman:** AL CN; AC 6; MV 12; T6; hp 21; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; PP 46%, OL 41%, FT 33%, MS 36%, HS 33%, DN 41%, CW 80%, RL 20%; ML 9; XP 420; leather armor, *shield +1,* short sword, dagger.

Shaglin and Toggle serve Kandrak out of fear. They are both city thieves who make their living by picking pockets and burglarizing shops and houses in town rather than by adventuring abroad. They are not pleased to be out in the wilds and follow the bard only because he is a higher-ranking member of the Zhentarim. If Kandrak is killed, they surrender if possible or fight only to defend themselves.

## FIGURE 5

### Placement of Dangerous Plants




1. **Choke Creeper**
2. **Giant Sundew**
3. **Mantrap**
4. **Obliviax**
5. **Tri-flower Frond**
6. **Yellow Musk Creeper**

Kandrak and his associates have not left the altar room because Kandrak thinks he has passed a magical portal of some kind (since he can't get back into the room with the spiral staircase). He is waiting for the portal to activate again so that he may exit.

If encountered by the PCs, the NPC party fights only to defend itself. If negotiations take place, the bard puts himself and his companions completely at the PC's service. As he points out, "Why fight each other? This crazy place may eventually kill us all." Kandrak attempts to ingratiate himself with the PCs by singing songs to inspire them, telling heroic tales of their homelands, etc. He is really interested only in using them to find the way out. Shaglin and Toggle are tight lipped. They fear to say much around Kandrak lest they say something wrong and be punished for it.

While in the library, Kandrak and the thieves do not attempt to steal anything from the PC party. This is simply a matter of keeping the peace. As there is nowhere to go with stolen goods, why steal them? In battle with any book guardians, Kandrak, Shaglin, and Toggle fight bravely but never suicidally. They help each other before helping the PCs. Once the control book is functional, all bets are off. Kandrak and his companions attempt to kill or steal the party blind and escape the library. If the PCs are foolish enough to allow Kandrak to use the control book (through a *suggestion* he might make), he will certainly attempt to trap them in one or two rooms (even if it means trapping Shaglin and Toggle as well).

**9. Alchemical Laboratory.** Upon entering this room, the party is immediately attacked by four zombies.

**Hill giant monster zombie:** Int non; AL N; AC 6; MV 9; HD 6; hp 40 each; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 4-16; SD immune to all mind-influencing spells, cold-based attacks, poison, *death magic;* half damage from blunt weapons; SZ H; ML special; XP 650; MC (Zombie, Monster).

**Gnoll zombies** (3): Int non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 12 each; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SD immune to mind-affecting spells, *death magic,* poison, and cold-based spells; SZ L; ML special; XP 65; MC (Zombie).

These creatures are not typical spell-created undead. They are corpses animated by a special powder similar to a myconid's animator spores (see Myconid entry in the *Monstrous Compendium).* They cannot be turned by clerics or affected by holy water. The creatures are the result of the last experiment to take place in the laboratory, the results of which produced a sparkling powdery substance that, when sprinkled over a corpse, created a zombie. Unfortunately, such alchemically created zombies are completely uncontrollable. A fleeing adventuring party or single PC will be pursued relentlessly until the shifting rooms cut off pursuit. Otherwise, the zombies simply stand idly waiting.

The room is cluttered with 5,000 gp worth of laboratory equipment. The worth of the equipment is reduced by 2% for every round of combat that takes place in the room, due to combatants crashing into the delicate implements and breaking objects during a fight. For example: If the party fights with the zombies for 15 rounds, the value of the equipment is reduced by 1,500 gp or 30%. After 50 rounds of combat, the interior of the lab is a complete shambles and no usable equipment can be salvaged.

On the western wall of the lab are shelves containing a number of jugs, vials, and bottles. All are well sealed and labeled. If the PCs search among the containers, they can find one quart of acid, two vials of holy water, and one vial of contact poison (class M; see Table 51 on page 73 of the *DMG).*

On the southern wall of the room are two large locked and *wizard locked* (12th level) cabinets. The mechanical locks on both are untrapped but are extremely intricate and difficult. Thieves suffer a −10% penalty to their open-locks ability on any attempt to pick these locks. The locks and cabinets are strong and durable, requiring 15 hp damage to batter them open. The PCs may use acid to eat through the locks or the cabinet doors without fear of harming the cabinet's contents. It requires one quart of acid per cabinet and 2-8 turns before the acid eats away the lock or door.

The easternmost cabinet contains potions of *healing, levitation,* and *sweet water,* and a vial of *oil of impact* (four applications). If the PCs batter the cabinet open, they will accidentally destroy 1-4 of the potions in doing so (DM's choice).

On the top shelf of the westernmost cabinet are a vial of holy water, a jar of *Keoghtom's ointment,* and two bottles of wood alcohol (if lit and thrown, treat as a flask of oil on Table 45, page 63 of the *DMG).* On the shelf beneath are the following books:

*Baron Stefan Krenin's Theory of Reanimation of Dead Tissue,* a detailed account of the creation of the sparkling powder that turns corpses into zombies. It contains the theories, formulas, and records of experiments that led to the powder. If sold to the Vault of Sages, the book brings 250 gp. If sold directly to an alchemist or wizard of 9th or higher level, the book brings twice that amount. At the DM's option, a wizard PC may keep the book and attempt to make or refine the animator powder, using the guidelines in "Creating Other Magical Items" on page 87 of the *DMG* for the chance of success.

*Thermal Testing* has a bright green cover and is guarded by a **green abishai** (hp 27). The book contains the "T" rune page of the control book. This book is a rare laboratory reference manual and is worth 150 gp.

*Herbalist's Handbook* has a dull green cover and is untrapped, unguarded, and worth 10 gp. It contains an "H" rune page from the control book.

*Circe's Cookbook* is a copy of the black sorceress's reflections on potion making. It contains no formulas but is worth 200 gp. The tome has a solid black cover and contains a **guardian daemon** (hp 27).

*Experimental Techniques and Methods* is an arcane collection of essays by wizards and alchemists, worth 300 gp. It has an orange cover and is untrapped and unguarded.

*The Well-Stocked Laboratory* is a standard reference manual found in most laboratories and thus worth only 15 gp. It is unguarded, but a contact poison was accidentally spilled across its cover. The poison is still very active; anyone removing the book from the shelf with bare hands must save vs. poison (class K, Table 51, as previously noted).

If the PCs batter open this cabinet, they accidentally break 1-4 of the containers on the top shelf (DM's choice). The liquid spills down onto the books. For every container broken, one book is ruined (DM's choice). Only the gold-piece sale value of the book is destroyed. Any traps, guardians, or rune pages from the control book are unaffected by such spillage.

**10. Scribe Room.** This room was used for copying and translating documents. In the center of the room are eight desks where the keep's scribes spent their time, carefully copying books and translating scrolls into the Common tongue. Each desk contains 20 sheets of parchment, 10 sheets of paper, and five bottles of writing ink that can be salvaged and sold by PCs.

On either side of the north door are large bookcases that contain over 100 scrolls each (3d10 + 100). The scrolls are primarily copies of speeches made by famous statesmen, essays, astronomical and astrological formulas, nonmagical chemical and alchemical formulas, and mathematical treatises. At the DM's discretion, a treasure map, written information, or both can be included in the scroll hoard as an introduction to an adventure prepared by the DM, one from DUNGEON Adventures, or a module from some other source. The values of the scrolls vary but average 4 gp each. The following magical scrolls may also be found in the cache: *comprehend languages, detect magic, read magic, know alignment, knock.*

A bookcase in the southeast corner holds the following reference books:

*Dethek: Dialects and Diction,* is a weighty tome worth 100 gp. It has a bright green cover and is guarded by a **green abishai** (hp 26). The book contains a translation of the Dethek alphabet to the Common alphabet. The PCs may use this guide to translate the rune pages of the control book.

*Symbols, Sigils, and Signs* is a large volume with a red cover, worth 150 gp. It is untrapped and unguarded, but one cover of the control book, bearing the scroll symbol of Oghma, is hidden in this book.

*Ruathlek Runes* is a book concerning the special magical script used by illusionists (see *Cyclopedia of the Realms* page 8) and is worth 300 gp. The tome contains the "R" rune page from the control book and a **guardian daemon** (hp 30). An illusionist reading this tome gains one first-level spell of the DM's choice for his spell book. The DM should note that the spell must be from the Illusion/Phantasm school and in no way raises the number of spells the illusionist can memorize.

The bookcase also contains the following dictionaries: *Dwarvish-Common, Elvish-Common, Gnomish-Common, Halfling-Common, Orcish-Common.* These dictionaries are worth 75 gp each and are neither trapped nor guarded.

**11. Concert Hall.** Against the western wall of the room is a small stage for the presentation of plays or music concerts. There are two large wardrobes, one in the northwest corner and the other in the southwest corner of the room. The northwest wardrobe is full of costumes, masks, wigs, hats, and costume jewelry. The jewelry is obviously false, being little more than bits of colored glass on string, wooden rings painted gold, etc. If the PCs make a thorough search of the wardrobe, they can find a *hat of disguise.*

The southwest wardrobe contains various props and accouterments actors might need. The wardrobe is filled with wooden swords and shields, slapsticks, and small rolls of painted canvas scenery. If the PCs make a careful search of this wardrobe, they also find a small pouch of *dust of illusion* with five pinches left.

In the southeast corner is a large bookcase holding eight books: *Actors and Acting; Stagecraft; Plays, Playwrights, and Performance; Oratory; Great Plays of Calimshan; Tales of the Theater; Make-up and Costume Design; Order of the Open-Eyed Owl. Actors and Acting* and *Tales of the Theater* were donated to Bard Keep by a powerful actors' guild. These two books are worth 200 gp each, but both are trapped. *Actors and Acting* contains a *sepia snake sigil. Tales of the Theater* contains a *glyph of warding* that delivers 5-20 (5d4) hp electrical damage to any non-Oghmanian opening the book. *Order of the Open-Eyed Owl* is a well-known play about knights, worth 20 gp. The volume is untrapped and unguarded but contains the "O" rune page of the control book. The remainder of the books are untrapped, unguarded, and worth 30 gp each.

**12. Private Lounge.** This lounge was provided for those who wished to simply curl up with a good book or relax after a hard day's work. There are several large, comfortable chairs with small tables and oil lamps nearby. Six books are stacked in a neat pile on a table in the center of the room:

*Rise and Fall of the Elven Empire, Vol. I* (Rise), *Vol. II* (Years of Glory), *Vol III* (Decline) is a huge compilation of the histories of the elves in the Forgotten Realms. The three books have bright red covers but are untrapped and unguarded. The tomes can be sold for 50 gp each or 300 gp as a set.

*History of Halfling Horticulture* is unguarded but is trapped with *explosive runes.* It contains an "H" rune page from the control book, which will not be harmed if the *explosive runes* are triggered. The book is uncommon and worth 150 gp.

*The Elemental Planes,* a small book with a jet black cover, is worth 175 gp. The book is guarded by a **black abishai** (hp 24).

*Mercenary and Guard Training* has a laminated wooden cover and is worth 125 gp. The book is trapped with two *sepia snake sigil* spells.

Along the northern wall are three long, narrow tables used for military strategy games and historical battle simulations. The tables are painted to represent different geographical features and are covered with monsters and small toy soldiers arrayed in various military formations. A large shelf above the table is piled high with scrolls (3d6 + 20). The scrolls are accounts of famous battles and essays on military tactics ("The Battle of the Bones," "Orc Horde Strategy," "Tactical Studies Rules," etc.). The scrolls alone are worth 2 gp each. The scrolls, tables, and miniatures can be sold as a set for 500 gp.

**13. Magic Practice Room.** The only item in this room is a large gray block of some unknown stone. It dominates the center of the room and was apparently used as either a target for spellcasters or as the backdrop on which targets were placed. The block is chipped, cracked, and covered with blast marks, scorched areas, and odd discolorations.

The room has steel blast doors that could be pulled down over the normal doors when powerful, fiery, or otherwise dangerous spells were being cast. The steel doors prevent fire, explosions, and other possible harmful side effects from reaching other rooms in the library. The blast doors are connected to pulleys and are counterweighted. It requires only a strength of 4 to pull them down. The blast doors have slide bolts at the top and bottom, enabling them to be bolted and locked if necessary.

Because of the many different powerful spells and magicks performed in this room, the fabric of reality is stretched

very thin here. There is no real danger from the room, but it produces an odd effect. If any PC or NPC stays in the room longer than two rounds, he becomes uneasy. The stone pillar seems to loom up menacingly, and the room seems full of secrets. Anyone staying longer than five rounds must save vs. spells at −1 or be affected as if by a *spook* spell. A save negates the effect, but the character is still very uneasy and must save vs. spells every five rounds or be *spooked*. In addition, the penalty to the saving throw increases by one every five rounds, e.g., −2 after 10 rounds, −3 after 15 rounds, and so on. The spell seems centered on the pillar, and those affected will attempt to escape the room as fast as possible. If unable to exit the room, they stay as far away from the pillar as they can and will exit the room as soon as possible. A *remove fear* spell will negate the effect, as will leaving the room for two rounds.

**14. Reading Room.** This room is very bright, with light coming from four crystal spheres, one in each corner of the room. The spheres have *continual light* spells cast on them and are mounted on small silver tripods. While the spheres look delicate and fragile, they have been *glassteeled* and are virtually unbreakable. The spheres are worth 300 gp each and the tripods 50 gp each.

There is a large oval table in the center of the room, and a large bookcase dominates the northern wall. The bookcase contains a set of encyclopedias identical to those in the other reading room (see area 5 for details) and the following additional books:

*Bard Keep, Its Works and Wonders* is a very important find for the PCs. This book has a dirty green cover but is not trapped or guarded. It is worth 800 gp for its valuable information on the magical construction techniques used to make the library. The book contains no maps and does not mention the number and kind of library rooms, but it can tell the PCs a number of things that they need to know. The following quotes, however, are not necessarily clear or concise:

"The rooms are moved by a book, marvelous and strange. Metal pages stamped with a single rune honoring the Binder are the controls. It is an achievement worthy of Oghma."

"Those lost in the shifting rooms need cast the *locate object* spell. Such spell will, if the Null Room is the object, lead the lost to it. This allows no exit but does bring knowledge of the location."

"A page may be made by one skillful in dweomercraft, and if such ingredients and implements be at hand allowing the endeavor—the main ingredient being time. The need for nearly two full days or up to three is essential. A Metal of substantial dweomer is the second needful ingredient. Hammered and polished in proper fashion, then rune inscribed, it must then be coated with the proper alchemical shine. With appropriate placement in a controlling tome, a *knock* spell intoned will bring its magic forth."

Using the information from the volume, a wizard may be able to create a functioning rune page for the library's control book. To create the page, the wizard will need ingredients from laboratory storage (room 1), magical metal alloy from the metallurgy lab (room 4), laboratory equipment from the alchemical laboratory (room 9), and a *knock* spell. It will take the wizard 3d8+36 hours to create the page. First the metal page must be carefully hammered, polished, and inscribed with the appropriate rune. The page is then coated with a special alchemical substance and inserted in its appropriate spot in the control book. The wizard must then cast a *knock* spell and close the book.

If the page created is the last page needed to complete the book, this procedure has a 70% chance of locking down the library and allowing the PCs to exit into the Null Space. If the PCs are able to cast *enchant an item* and *permanency* spells, they can make fully functional rune pages. If they can't, the doors to the Null Space disappear after only two rounds. Whether the procedure is successful or not, the newly created page is ruined; if the procedure is unsuccessful, the PCs can create another page and try again (there are enough ingredients to make four rune pages). Also, if the PCs attempt to make more than one rune page at a time, it requires an extra 1-8 hours per additional page. Only one *knock* spell is needed regardless of the number of pages attempted. However, a chance of success roll must be made for each of the pages made by PCs, or the book fails to function and the pages are ruined.

*Elementary Engineering* has a bright red cover and is worth 50 gp. It is untrapped and unguarded.

*Elves, Elvenkind, and Evermeet* is a large volume of rare essays on elves, worth 250 gp. The book has a vivid black cover, contains an "E" rune page of the control book, and is guarded by a **black abishai** (hp 22).

*Known Networks of the North* is a long-out-of-date volume on various thief and spy networks operating in the north some 120 years ago. It is now worth only 10 gp. The book has a red cover and is trapped with a *glyph of warding*. The glyph delivers 2d8+1 hp damage (the same as a *cause serious wounds* spell) to anyone opening the book without first speaking the name Mask, the god of thieves. The book also contains the "N" rune page of the control book.

**15. Library Storage.** This room is the storage area for the library. It looks very much like the laboratory storage room (area 1), filled with shelving and unlocked small cabinets. The shelves and cabinets are filled with candleholders, candelabra, boxes of candles, ink wells, quill pens, and other such paraphernalia needed for reading and writing. Most of the stuff is worthless. The candleholders and candelabra are wooden or made of base metals and are very utilitarian in design; the ink wells are empty and are merely small, crude ceramic pots.

A careful search of the room reveals three magnifying glasses, 500 candles in boxes, 200 sheets of paper, 200 sheets of parchment, 100 lbs. of sealing wax in a cask, and 25 vials of excellent writing ink. The PCs may salvage and sell what they can at the prices listed on page 67 of the *PHB*.

One cabinet in the southeast corner contains three books: *Invoices and Inventory, Library Supply,* and *Bookkeeping*. None of the three are guarded or trapped. These books are so tedious and boring that they are worth only 5 gp each; however, the "I" rune page can be found in *Invoices and Inventory*.

## Concluding the Adventure

When the PCs return to Silverymoon and the Vault of Sages with books salvaged from Bard Keep, Orand Zalthik will be more than willing to buy all they have at fair market value. Orand is interested only in books; the PCs must look elsewhere to find a buyer for any other type of treasure.

The Halls of Inspiration will be most

displeased and will neither accept as gifts nor offer any payment for anything brought from Bard Keep. They may even go so far as to sanction an assassination attempt on one or more of the PCs. Once the PCs return to the city, the Inspired Ones may settle for a more subtle approach. The Temple of Oghma in Silverymoon may retaliate against the PCs by starting a rumor campaign against them and the Vault of Sages. The Halls of Inspiration will spread the following rumors:

—The PCs have found a valuable but *cursed* item that will attract powerful evil creatures to the city.

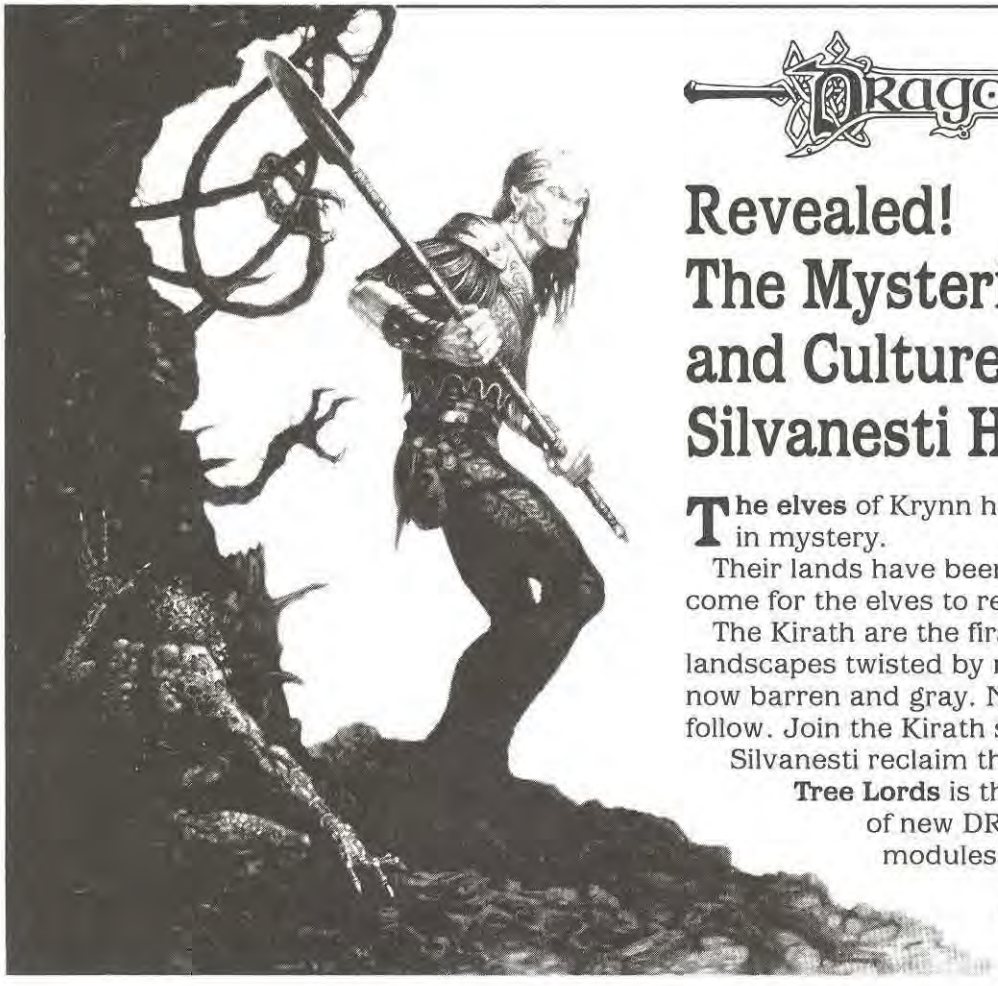
—The PCs are controlled by some outer planar creature and do its bidding.

—The books, tomes, and writings brought by the PCs to the Vault of Sages are *cursed.* Anyone using these texts is also *cursed.*

The effect these rumors have on the PCs' dealings in Silverymoon is left to the DM's discretion. The populace may not believe a word of it and treat the PC party the same as any other band of adventurers. On the other hand, people may believe all the rumors and drive the PCs from the city. The DM can use a more indirect approach and have various groups believing, or at least considering the possibility, that one of the rumors is true. Thus, some of the populace may avoid the PCs out of fear of disease while some mages and sages avoid the PCs because of their concerns about being made into slaves. Also, members of the Oghmanian church avoid the PCs and some members may try and make life as difficult as possible for them.

The schism between the Vault of Sages and the Halls of Inspiration can be taken in whatever direction the DM wishes. The PCs' explorations may be an unfortunate incident that cools the relationship between them. They may eventually come to terms and settle the matter amiably. Or, this blatant disregard for church policy may turn into a full blown religious or civil war in Silverymoon and cause a good deal of damage.

If the PCs have killed or captured Kandrak and his companion or have otherwise spoiled the Zhentarim's plans, they will be considered enemies of that organization. This may be of little consequence so long as the PCs stay on the periphery of the Zhentarim's areas of control. Should the PCs venture deeper into Zhentarim territory, they may have some explaining to do. Ω

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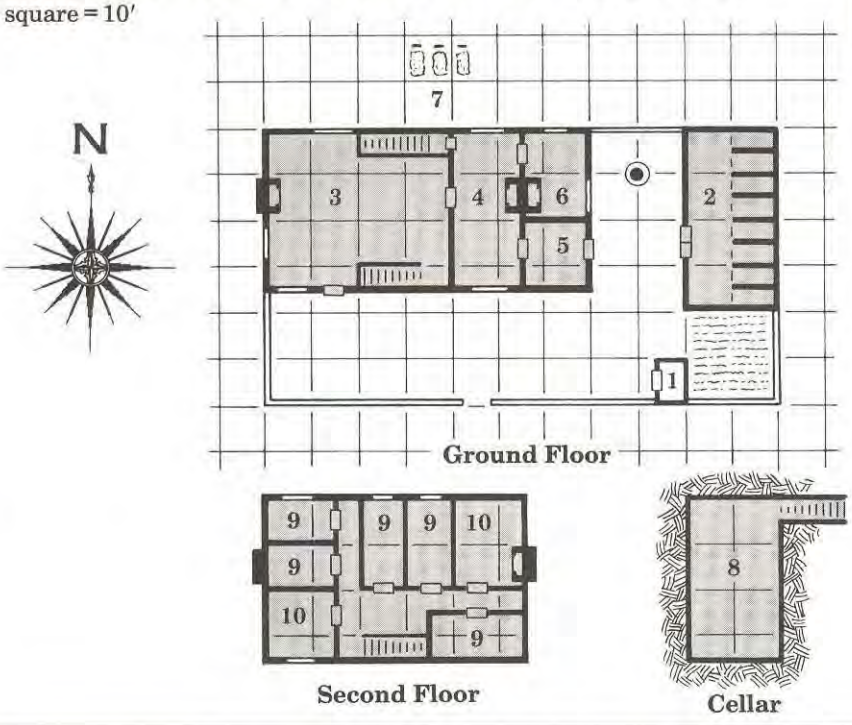
# THROUGH THE NIGHT

## INN OF THE SMILING SPIRIT

1 square = 10′




## Garlic, holy symbols, wooden stakes, and pure terror.

BY LEONARD WILSON

"Through the Night" is an AD&D® 2nd Edition mini-adventure for 4-7 characters of levels 1-2 (about 8 total levels) and any mixture of races, classes, and alignments. The scenario is designed to be dropped into an existing campaign in any temperate, sparsely populated area of marshy lowlands.

### Adventure Background

The PCs have been traveling all day across the open moors, and a storm threatens as evening draws near. They've met no one on the road and seen nothing that passed for shelter since the village they left that morning. Just before night falls and the storm breaks, they arrive at a roadside inn.

The sign over the door pictures a ghostly but winsome maiden and declares the inn to be that of "The Smiling Spirit." Curiously, though the grounds are well tended, all the windows have been boarded up and no lights are visible within. The building is dead silent.

### For the Dungeon Master

A few days ago, a group of adventurers newly returned from dungeon delving stopped at the Smiling Spirit on their way home. The dungeon in question was home to, among other creatures, a slithering tracker. When the adventurers killed most of the other denizens, the tracker figured it was time to move on to fresh hunting grounds, so it hitched a ride in a backpack. The party stopped at the Smiling Spirit, and the tracker came out to take up residence under the floorboards.

When people in the inn started dying mysteriously in the night, drained of blood, the survivors jumped to the obvious conclusion that a vampire was to blame. The precautions they took were, of course, futile. In the early hours of this morning, the tracker claimed the last of the inn's inhabitants.

The storm this night will rage until about 4:00 A.M., when it will be replaced by drizzle and fog that will last until burned away by the morning.

The challenge for the PCs is to live through the night, caught as they are in the hunting grounds of the tracker.

**Slithering tracker:** INT average; AL N; AC 5; MV 12; HD 5; hp 25; THAC0 15; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA paralyzation; SD transparency; SZ S; ML 15; XP 975; MC. The tracker kills paralyzed victims by engulfing them and slowly draining their blood. A man-sized creature will die from the blood loss in about an hour.

### To Sleep, or Not to Sleep?

A party that decides to press on through the night and the rain, rather than stay at the inn, is asking for trouble. With visibility reduced to almost nothing, the adventurers are sure to wander off the poor road and into a bog. Give them a warning encounter with too-soft ground that nearly swallows a horse or party member. If they turn back at that point, they'll find their way back to the inn. If they choose instead to camp where they are, they'll spend a wet and miserable night, and still be within the hunting grounds of the tracker.

If the PCs are determined to continue traveling that night, they'll become hopelessly lost. Even if, by some miracle, they don't drown in a mire, the denizens of the swamp should make short work of them. The party's attempt to escape from the swamp would be an adventure in itself, and is beyond the

# THE NIGHT

scope of this module.

A party that does stop for the night may still desire to spend much of the time awake despite having put in a full day's travel. Any PC who tries to stay up more than four of the presumed 12 hours of darkness will have trouble doing so. For each hour past the fourth, the character must make a wisdom check (roll ability score or less on 1d20) in order to stay awake. This basic chance for success should be modified by +1 for each hour of sleep (if any) the character has already had that night, and by −1 for each hour of wakefulness past the fifth hour that night. The DM may also wish to modify the chance of success to reflect other circumstances. Lying in a soft, warm bed is very conducive to sleep (a modifier of −5 or so), while attempts at constant pacing or chatting could grant a bonus of +5.

## The Inn of the Smiling Spirit

All the windows of the inn have been boarded up, and both outer doors have been barred from the inside. Entry to the main building must be forced.

**1. Poultry Coop.** The few chickens and geese in the coop are alive but spooked. The tracker visited them but decided to leave such easy prey to devour at leisure. It hasn't realized that the poultry are no longer being fed and will soon die and go to waste.

**2. Stable.** The single old riding horse stabled here is skittish after being visited by the tracker. It's been left alive for the same reason as the poultry.

**3. Commons Room.** This room is stocked with the traditional bar, tables, and chairs. Dozens of crudely carved wooden holy symbols are scattered about the room—propped on the mantle, hung on the walls, left lying on the tables and floor. Dozens of blobs of tallow—candles that were left to burn themselves out—are similarly scattered. The room reeks from the garlic hung everywhere. The ashes in the fireplace are still warm.

The corner table by the fireplace still holds dirty dishes from a meal and a half-emptied mug of wine. The remaining scraps of food can't have been sitting there more than a few days. The body of a youth (the stable boy) is slumped in the corner behind the table, completely drained of blood. A knife and a bit of wood that's been half-carved into another holy symbol are still clutched in his hands.

If a *speak with dead* spell is used, the stable boy (named Kedgah, a neutral-aligned zero-level human) reports terrible feelings of terror of a vampire he believes is stalking him. He finally fell asleep just half a day ago, having stayed awake for many hours—and never woke up.

**4. Kitchen.** This kitchen is clean and well stocked but unremarkable. The air reeks of garlic; mashed and cut garlic buds are scattered everywhere on the floor and tables.

**5. Pantry.** The pantry shelves are well stocked and could provide many meals for the PCs. A thorough search will find the serving girl's hoard of 52 cp hidden away in a clay jar.

**6. Innkeeper's Room.** This bedroom is well furnished and has a comfortable double bed. A locked strongbox under the bed holds 28 gp, 58 sp, and 175 cp. The key to the box is under a pillow on the bed.

**7. Graves.** These three recently dug graves are marked with crude wooden symbols appropriate to the local culture. If the bodies are exhumed, they will be found to have wooden stakes driven through their hearts, their heads separated from their bodies, and garlic in their mouths. The corpses are of an older man and woman (the innkeeper and his wife) and the young serving girl, all only days dead.

**8. Cellar.** This storeroom is stocked with several large tuns of wine and kegs of mead, ale, and beer.

**9. Private Rooms.** Each of these rooms has two sets of bunk beds, a table with a water basin, and a pair of stools.

**10. Private Rooms.** These larger rooms are each furnished with a comfortable double bed, two chairs, and a table with a water basin.

## Tracker Tactics

If the party sets up camp anywhere outside the main building of the inn, the tracker accosts them at midnight while it's out hunting.

If the party stays at the inn, the tracker hears them enter and comes out to hunt immediately, looking for a chance to catch a lone victim. It brazenly follows PCs about the inn, always choosing to tail the smallest group if a decision must be made. Each time these PCs enter a room, there is a 5% chance for one of them to notice the tracker, which seems to be a pool of water on the floor. If the tracker becomes aware that it's been spotted, it oozes limply between the floorboards and disappears. If caught where there are no floorboards—in the cellar or outside the inn building—the tracker remains still until poked or prodded, or until an attack seems imminent, at which point it attempts to flee.

If the tracker never finds a lone target to attack, it waits until the PCs have settled down to sleep for the night, giving them an hour or so to drift off before slipping in to attack those on watch.

Once it begins attacking, the tracker fights with guerrilla tactics, attempting to paralyze a single target, then fleeing to set up another chance for a surprise attack. The only possible place to corner the tracker is the basement. Anywhere else in the inn, the tracker can always slip through cracks in the floor in one round; in the stables or poultry coop, there are cracks in the walls large enough for it to pass through. If encountered outside in the wet, the tracker, already nearly invisible, can vanish into the rainy night in a matter of seconds with a 99% chance of success. Any character who insists he is following closely enough to keep the thing in sight is asking for trouble. The tracker then comes to a sudden stop and rears

*Continued on page 57*

# 'TIL DEATH DO US PART

BY J. MARK BICKING

## They were joined for better or for worse—mostly for worse.

Artwork by Terry Dykstra

*Mark is a technical writer and newspaper columnist. When not working or designing dungeons, he (along with his wife) is raising their two-year-old daughter, Kelsie. This is Mark's first appearance in DUNGEON® Adventures, and his first magazine publication.*

" 'Til Death Do Us Part" is an AD&D® adventure for 5-6 player characters of levels 8-10 (about 50 total levels). Set in the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ fantasy world, it is designed as an extended random encounter for those adventurers in search of the ruins of Myth Drannor, to add an air of mystery and menace to that quest. A well-balanced party, including a paladin and a cleric capable of turning powerful undead, is most likely to survive the hit-and-run tactics employed in this adventure.

The adventure site is located in the dense forest east of Shadowdale, but its position can be customized to fit any campaign by placing the abbey and the surrounding broken landscape in any lightly traveled section of a temperate forest, preferably one inhabited by elves.

Several of the spells and magical items used in this adventure are found in FORGOTTEN REALMS accessory F4 *The Magister* (these are marked with an asterisk (*) in the text). Such items include the spells *ghost pipes* and *dire charm,* and the *greenstone amulet.* If you do not have a copy of this sourcebook, substitute appropriate spells and items from other sources.

Additionally, a monster (the mezzoloth) from the *Monstrous Compendium* Outer Planes Appendix appears herein. If this accessory is not used, a mezzodaemon from the FIEND FOLIO® tome can be used, though substantial changes will need to be made in the monster's spells and tactics.

### For the Player Characters

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

> Rumors of vast wealth and high adventure have lured you into the lush, mysterious elven forest in search of the vast ruins of Myth Drannor. Dreamy images from legends and bards' songs have long tantalized you and other outsiders, but only since the recent retreat of the elves has anyone dared to seek

out the ancient, mystical city. Bad weather has plagued your journey, but visions of wealth beyond imagination and new and powerful magic have made the elements seem a minor inconvenience. However, as night nears and a heavy blanket of fog reduces your visibility, you begin to question your decision to venture into this strange land.

The map you paid handsomely for suddenly seems not to be worth the parchment it is written on, for it contains no notation of the broken, desolate landscape into which you have stumbled. A nightmarish patch of twisted, dead trees and barren hills appears to have leapt out of the otherwise fertile forest. The likelihood of finding a suitable campsite in this odd terrain seems slim, but you notice a rocky outcropping that may provide a brief respite from the storm's remarkable ferocity.

As you look up from your apparently useless map, a sizzling fork of lightning outlines the husk of a structure atop a hill in the distance. The accommodations appear far from ideal but nonetheless vastly superior to those offered by your current position.

## For the Dungeon Master

This adventure centers around the PCs' encounter with Elorianne, a groaning spirit (banshee) occupying the ruins of an abbey on a desolate hillside hidden in the midst of the elven forest. Her consort Arandir, a ghost, is equally terrifying and adds a twist to the encounter through his cooperation with the banshee. This deadly duo, teamed with the mezzoloth trap that protects their tower lair (see area 12), make it likely that the only rest the party finds this evening will be quite permanent.

The *Monstrous Compendium* refers to an evil female elf as "a very rare thing indeed," but Elorianne Moonflower's chaotic-evil alignment was well earned. Her life was a sordid tale of jealously, bitterness, betrayal, and murder. Now a banshee, she wails over memories of a life ended prematurely and of twisted, evil schemes gone awry.

Elorianne's father, an elf steeped in tradition and ceremony, was so preoccupied with concern over his vast holdings and social position that he had little time to devote to his daughters. What attention he did pay them was given almost exclusively to Mirael, his extremely beautiful eldest daughter. This attention took the form of attempts to arrange a marriage that would best serve his social ambitions, but much to her father's frustration, Mirael spurned the advances of many suitors.

Elorianne, enraged by her father's neglect, harbored a deep-seated but well-concealed hatred of her older sister and was further embittered by the knowledge that her father's sense of tradition prevented Elorianne from marrying before Mirael had wed. This restriction would have meant little to her had her dowry not been tied to this condition.

Elorianne eventually began an affair with Arandir, a charming human thief who would prove to be the catalyst for her present undead status. Their passion for each other was as complete as Elorianne's hatred of her family. Arandir, sensing an opportunity to benefit from his lover's thirst for revenge, exploited that jealousy and bitterness. He easily convinced Elorianne to help launch an intricate plot against Mirael. Elorianne conspired with Arandir to murder her sister, assume her identity, and disappear with their newly acquired wealth.

At Elorianne's urging, Arandir courted Mirael. The unsuspecting maiden was overwhelmed by his tales of faraway lands and great adventure. Eventually the rogue won her heart, convincing her to become his wife. Mirael's father looked upon Arandir with great suspicion and was heartbroken by the prospect of a mixed racial marriage, but when he realized the extent of Mirael's happiness (for she vowed to love no other), he overcame his concerns and shared her joy.

Mirael's happiness proved short lived. She died violently on the eve of her wedding when a *necklace of strangulation,* a bridal gift from her husband, choked her life away; her body was weighted down and cast into a lake. Elorianne, who had made a pretense of departing on a long trip before the wedding, altered her appearance with a *hat of disguise* (in the shape of a hair comb) and joined her lover. Elorianne so effectively doubled her sister that even her father was unaware of the substitution.

Yet fate would intervene. In the midst of the marriage feast, Mirael's spirit appeared in her wedding dress, clawing silently at her constricted neck and dripping lake water. Possessing a guest, she took the comb from Elorianne's hair and named her sister and Arandir as her murderers. Before departing, she turned to Elorianne and uttered a fateful curse: "Despair, sister, for as long as you live, you and your lover will never be together." With the conspiracy revealed, Mirael's tormented spirit finally found rest.

Elorianne's father, whose rage over the crime was exceeded only by his concern over the impact of scandal, had Elorianne and her consort taken to a deserted abbey on an isolated hill near the edge of the elven forest. Elorianne was imprisoned in the abbey's tower, *geased* to believe she would die if she attempted to escape. She looked on in horror from the tower window as Arandir was hanged. All witnesses were sworn to secrecy, and knowledge of the events died with the ages.

Elorianne spent many weeks bemoaning her fate, gradually losing her grip on reality. Eventually she was visited by Arandir's ghost, who called on her to join him. Her mind gone, she stepped through the tower window and plunged to her death. Though cursed to be apart in life, Elorianne and Arandir now haunt the abbey ruins together in death, searching the surrounding area for victims (elves are prized above all others).

**Elorianne** (groaning spirit): INT exceptional; AL CE; AC 0; MV 15; HD 7; hp 44; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SA death wail; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; immune to *charm, sleep, hold,* and cold- and electricity-based attacks; turned as special undead; MR 50%; SZ M; ML 13; XP 4,000; MC.

Elorianne is the rarest of banshees, for she retains the beauty she possessed in life, a condition that makes her ruthlessly evil penchant for death and destruction all the more terrifying. Victims initially find themselves captivated by her soft, gentle features that conceal the dark hatred burning in her eyes. Her wail, which reflects the full torment of a thousand lost souls, twists that face into a sickly ruin. A smile returns only after all who stand before her are dead.

Were it not for the presence of her ghostly lover, Elorianne would be a creature of reckless impulse, and she will revert to this condition if Arandir is

destroyed. She reluctantly defers to Arandir's judgment if caution is necessary.

Note that banshees are turned as special undead, making them one of the toughest undead opponents a cleric will ever face. This point is further reinforced by the fact that *exorcise* spells do not affect AD&D 2nd Edition banshees.

**Arandir** (ghost): INT high; AL LE; AC 0 or 8; MV 9; HD 10; hp 69; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg age 10-40 years; SA save vs. spells or flee in panic for 2-12 turns, *magic jar;* SD silver weapons to hit, immune to spell attacks from nonethereal casters; SZ M; ML special; XP 7,000; MC.

Despite sharing Elorianne's hatred of all living creatures, Arandir's actions are characterized by a surprising sense of caution learned during his stint as an adventuring thief. Given this background, he is quite capable of determining the relative strength of an adventuring party, and he will customize his attack strategy to match the threat against him.

Arandir retains the fondness for treasure that characterized his career as a rogue, and he particularly values anything acquired through theft and murder. His cooperation with the banshee has proven as lucrative as it is emotionally fulfilling.

### Guerilla Tactics

Until recently, the unwelcome landscape surrounding the abbey had been enough to keep the curious away, and victims had been scarce. But the number of travelers in the area has increased dramatically, a development the undead initially greeted with wicked glee. They were surprised, however, to discover that the threat against them posed by these visitors had grown exponentially. Since the retreat of the elves to Evermeet, the undead primarily have encountered outside adventuring parties, and out of necessity have become quite a bit more subtle and cunning in their methods of attack. In the past, the mere sight of the undead and Elorianne's wail quite easily destroyed anyone unfortunate enough to venture into the area. Suddenly finding powerfully equipped, savvy adventurers in their midst, Elorianne and Arandir have taken steps to protect their lair from those vigorous enough to resist their attacks (see "The Abbey Ruins"). The undead are diabolically brilliant, and if run with strategy should prove challenging to even the most powerful PCs.

Elorianne can sense the presence of any living creatures within a five-mile radius of the abbey. When she detects living beings, Arandir goes out to scout the area, then uses the knowledge he has gathered to plan their attack or defense. Overwhelmingly powerful parties are left alone, in hopes that they will skirt the area altogether.

While the banshee and ghost detest the living (Elorianne actually finds the presence of any living creatures painful), they will not mindlessly attack if such an action will lead to their own destruction. However, if the odds are stacked in their favor, Elorianne and Arandir will attack outside the abbey to kill as many adventurers as possible and drive off the survivors. Given the increase in travelers, which the undead view as an omen of things to come, they do not want to lose the abbey's unique and unrenewable protective magicks unless it is absolutely necessary.

If the PCs in your campaign possess many powerful magical weapons and defenses, have low saving throws, or are otherwise immune to the special attacks of the undead, consider adopting the optional rules for limited damage based on weapon type against noncorporeal undead as outlined in David Howery's article "Dead on Target," in DRAGON® issue #126.

### The Abbey Ruins

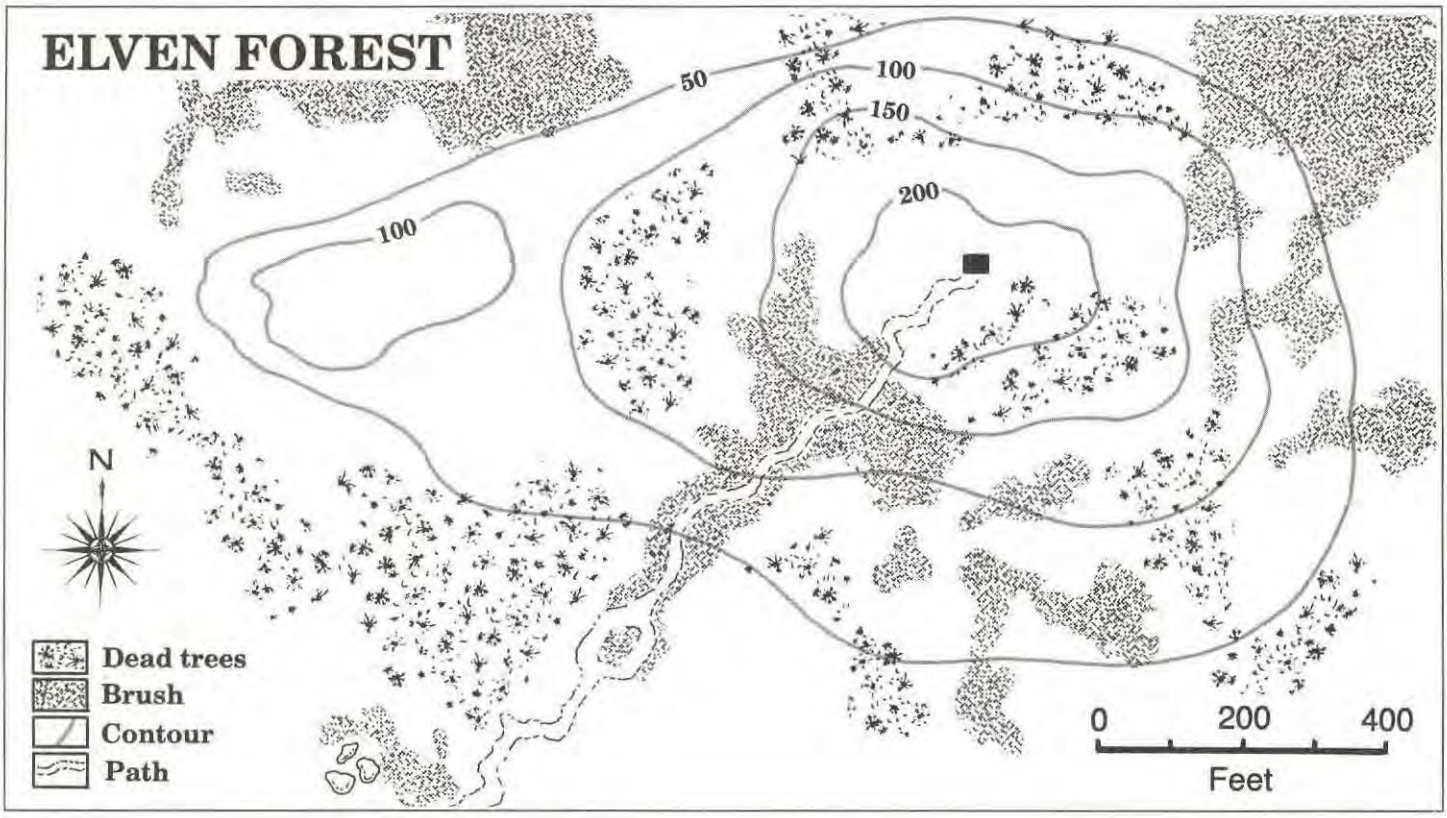
Centuries ago, an elven noble was severely wounded by a squealer while traveling on a diplomatic expedition. As he lay on his deathbed, his emissaries located the only healers nearby, a pair of clerics of the demigod Deneir. They were able to save the diplomat's life, and as a reward their order was granted a rather unique privilege—the right to construct an abbey in the midst of the elven wood, where the isolated locale would facilitate uninterrupted study and prayer. The cloistered clerics accomplished much, discovering many new techniques for healing. Deneir, as the patron of sigils and glyphs, granted these unusually devout followers the ability to trace exceptionally powerful *glyphs of warding,* one of which remains today (see area 5). With time, the order died out and these secrets were forgotten. The abbey fell to ruin over the centuries and remained unoccupied until Elorianne's imprisonment.

Approximately a year ago, the abbey was discovered during the daytime hours by Julius, an accomplished but rather impulsive wandering mage of 12th level. Intrigued by the abbey's proximity to Myth Drannor, he sought to make it his abode. Dispatching his apprentice to recover his less-portable belongings, he began a small-scale restoration project, repairing damaged areas as needed, drawing plans for construction of a dungeon complex, and casting protective and early-warning spells. The banshee, in agony over the presence of a living creature, sought to destroy the mage. But Arandir, witnessing Julius's power, realized that mystical protections could prove useful. With a great deal of effort, he convinced Elorianne to wait.

Finding the room above the courtyard to be the only suitable chamber that remained fully intact, Julius chose it for his workshop and made plans to explore the remaining tower once he had brought in the rest of his equipment. Julius's crowning achievement at the abbey was the creation of a specially triggered *guards and wards* spell, a type of magical home-security system. Through use of his *ring of multiple wishes,* he set the spell's activation to coincide with any attempt at forced entry—a precautionary measure for his anticipated departure for Myth Drannor. With his protective wards now complete, he took up the task of exploring the rest of the apparently deserted abbey.

This proved to be a fatal mistake. The mage learned that the abbey was inhabited only as Arandir's attack stole 20 years from his life expectancy. Nonetheless, he confidently set about to defeat the ghost, unaware of the banshee's presence. It was a tragic oversight, for when she appeared from behind and let loose a horrible wail, he dropped like a stone and perished on the spot.

Finding an *iron flask* and notes about the item's imprisoned mezzoloth among the mage's possessions, Elorianne was diabolically inspired and suggested its use as a guardian for the abbey. Upon the return of Julius's apprentice, Arandir successfully *magic jarred* him and used the final *wish* in Julius's ring to seal the flask permanently within the stone of the tower's trapdoor as one last




protective measure (see area 12).

Although it was once hidden in the lush greenery of the forest, the abbey is now the most prominent feature of the desolate locale. Elorianne's wail has turned the immediate area into a twisted parody of the rich forest that surrounds it. Detesting all living things, the undead have systematically destroyed any trace of plant and animal life, as evidenced by the bleached bones that litter the ground. The ancient, mighty trees of the elven forest have been unusually resilient to Elorianne's presence, yet the area within a 2½-mile radius is a twisted wasteland. Only thistles, weeds, and scrub grasses survive. The trees that remain standing are dead and rotting. A druid or ranger is 60% likely to determine that some unnatural force is responsible for the devastation if it is examined closely, but the current weather conditions make this task nearly impossible. Spells such as *commune with nature* and *speak with plants* cannot function because of the extent of the devastation, and any type of spell causing plant growth has a mere 5% chance of success because of the barren soil.

Behind a thick, almost impenetrable patch of thistles and thorn bushes, the PCs can locate a rough path leading toward the abbey. When the PCs arrive at the top of the hill, read the following to the players:

> After surmounting an obstacle course of fallen trees and ground that gives way beneath your feet, you arrive drained and battered at the ruins of a structure that has the general appearance of a temple. The ancient stone framework, apparently weatherbeaten by storms of a thousand years, is nearly as broken as the hillside on which it rests. Bones of various creatures litter the ground.
>
> An ornate archway, a full 14′ high at its peak and barred by a heavy iron portcullis, leads into the structure.

The arrival of the party triggers the first of several hit-and-run attacks. Elorianne emerges from the abbey, as close to the party as possible without revealing her lair in the tower. She immediately employs her *death wail* and retreats before the party can react. The element of surprise is critical; the banshee will abandon this mode of attack if the PCs are not grouped within the 30′ range of her wail and preoccupied with the task of entering the building. Elorianne will not engage in melee at this point, instead retreating into the building to dodge spell attacks and turning attempts. Once within the walls, she returns to the tower.

The sight of the banshee is so horrifying that all who see her must save vs. spells or flee in terror for 10 rounds. Fleeing characters are 50% likely to drop all objects carried in their hands. The hillside surrounding the abbey is dotted with deep pits dug by the *magic jarred* apprentice before he was eventually slain. Anyone fleeing in terror from the banshee is 75% likely to fall into one of these traps, which are lined with sharp spikes that inflict 3d6 hp damage to anyone stumbling into a pit on a dead run.

### Level One

Julius's special *guards and wards* spell is similar in activation to a *magic mouth* spell. Anyone attempting to lift

the portcullis through physical or magical means (or attempting any other type of forced entry) causes the spell to take effect, filling the abbey with a heavy mist that reduces visibility to 10′ and setting other defenses as noted later. The entire compound begins to radiate an aura of magic that nullifies use of *detect magic* spells by any spell-caster below 12th level. The DM should review the description of the *guards and wards* spell for general details on the spell's effects.

There are signs of recent repairs throughout the compound. A dwarf will immediately recognize that these restorations were hastily made and wholly inadequate. The ruins are in such poor condition that area-effect spells such as *fireball* and *lightning bolt* are 50% likely to cause the immediate area to collapse. Unless otherwise noted, the ceiling height in all rooms is 12′.

The portcullis provides the only means of entry short of spell use. Any attempts to climb through elevated holes in the structure (such as through the ceiling of the chapel area) are inadvisable in the storm and likely to bring large sections of the structure down upon the foolhardy.

**1. Courtyard.** The portcullis is heavy but not trapped, and can be lifted by a combined strength of 34. As the portcullis begins to rise, a set of bagpipes, glowing and droning a haunting melody, descends from the ceiling. This phenomenon is the result of a modified *ghost pipes** spell, designed by Julius to be atmospheric but otherwise harmless (though it serves as an alarm). Once the tune is complete, the bagpipes drop to the floor, their magic dispelled.

The courtyard measures 30′ × 30′ and is topped by a vaulted ceiling 24′ at its highest point. There is an identical barred archway in the wall opposite to the entrance used by the party. A pair of recently repaired locked double doors are set in the west wall. The most prominent feature of the courtyard is a truly grisly sight: an abandoned cart with a pair of skeletal draft horses still in harness. Julius's apprentice returned to the abbey in this cart, and the unfortunate animals were victims of the banshee's wail.

The large double doors open to a 10′ × 20′ corridor engulfed in thick vapor. A second set of double doors leading into the chapel (area 5) is fully concealed behind a thick wall of Julius's magically created *webs*.

**2. Storage.** This 10′ × 10′ chamber once stored herbs and ointments used by the clerics in their healing research. Shattered remains of tables and shelves, long unused, line the walls. The base of the remaining tower protrudes into the southeast corner of the chamber. A secret door allowing access to the tower opens inward but is immovable because of collapsed rubble inside the tower.

Attempting to open the secret door triggers a *magic mouth* (from Julius) that speaks the following message in a haughty, taunting tone: "Despair, weak ones, for you shall pay for your presumption with your lives."

The only notable feature in this room is the thick layer of webs that lines the "ceiling" (see area 9). If these magical webs are destroyed, they will re-form within one turn, growing rapidly from the tops of the walls to meet in the center of the ceiling again. This is another of Julius's works.

**3. Kitchen.** This 10′ × 10′ chamber appears to be a makeshift kitchen. The room shows signs of relatively recent cleaning, but all the food is spoiled.

**4. Library.** A pair of open, arched doorways leads into this 10′ × 20′ chamber. On the large, high desks rest open but unreadable manuscripts. Ornate carvings decorate otherwise unremarkable bookshelves. A steady trickle of water runs along the ceiling and into the room from an unknown source, and this has ruined most of the books here.

If the party searches this room carefully for a full turn, the PCs can recover a text detailing the worship of Deneir. This text will fetch 50 gp from a collector but is of infinitely greater value to a cleric whose faith is detailed. Lawful-good characters may wish to deliver this work to an appropriate temple if the location of one is known.

A thick oak door, *wizard locked* at the 12th level of experience, sits in the middle of the west wall, disguised by an illusion that makes the wall appear intact. Close examination (such as touching the wall where the door sits) will reveal its true nature.

**5. Chapel.** This 30′ × 30′ chamber reflects a quiet serenity despite the rain rushing in through large sections of missing ceiling. Where the ceiling remains, it rises to 24′. The most prominent feature in this room is a large circular mosaic in the floor, sections of which are shattered and covered with fallen stones. Matched stairways lead up to a balcony and a set of double doors in the eastern wall, but the southern stairwell has been shattered by rubble and is impassible. Two large, ornate windows line the southern wall.

Close examination of the room and its ruined contents will reveal its former use as a chapel. The mosaic, which depicts a burning candle over an open eye, remains in remarkably good condition despite the rubble. A section of this mosaic near the western wall lifts away to reveal a small niche in which sits a locked metal box. This box is protected by a *glyph of warding* that causes blindness to any character not speaking Deneir's name before touching it (no save applicable). The box opens to reveal the clerics' masterworks: a *manual of bodily health* and two jars of *Keoghtom's ointment.*

Once all of the characters have entered this room, Arandir makes his first appearance. His actions are based on how much of the party remains intact from Elorianne's initial attack. If more than a third of the party has been slain or driven off (particularly if the party's cleric or paladin is absent), Arandir attacks the party in melee, seeking to age any human characters. However, if the party somehow escaped unscathed from the banshee's attack, the ghost attempts to use its *magic jar* ability on a party member. If the attempt is successful, he follows the group's lead until the PCs arrive at area 12, where he forces the possessed PC to remove the stopper trap (and immediately flees the host body).

If Arandir engages the party in melee and is *turned* or takes heavy damage, he will return to the tower lair and await the triggering of the trap there.

### Level Two

The balcony in the chapel area leads to a set of locked double doors that open into a 10′ × 20′ corridor, whose true length is undetectable from the doorway because of the shroud of vapor that fills the area.

**6-7. Monastic Cells.** These matching 10′ × 10′ chambers are unremarkable except for the absence of most of the northern wall, through which the heavy rain falls and runs through cracks in the floor. Any heavily armored character foolish enough to walk toward the north wall has a 50% chance of causing the floor to collapse into the library below. The character sustains 3d6 hp damage from the fall and rubble dropping on him.

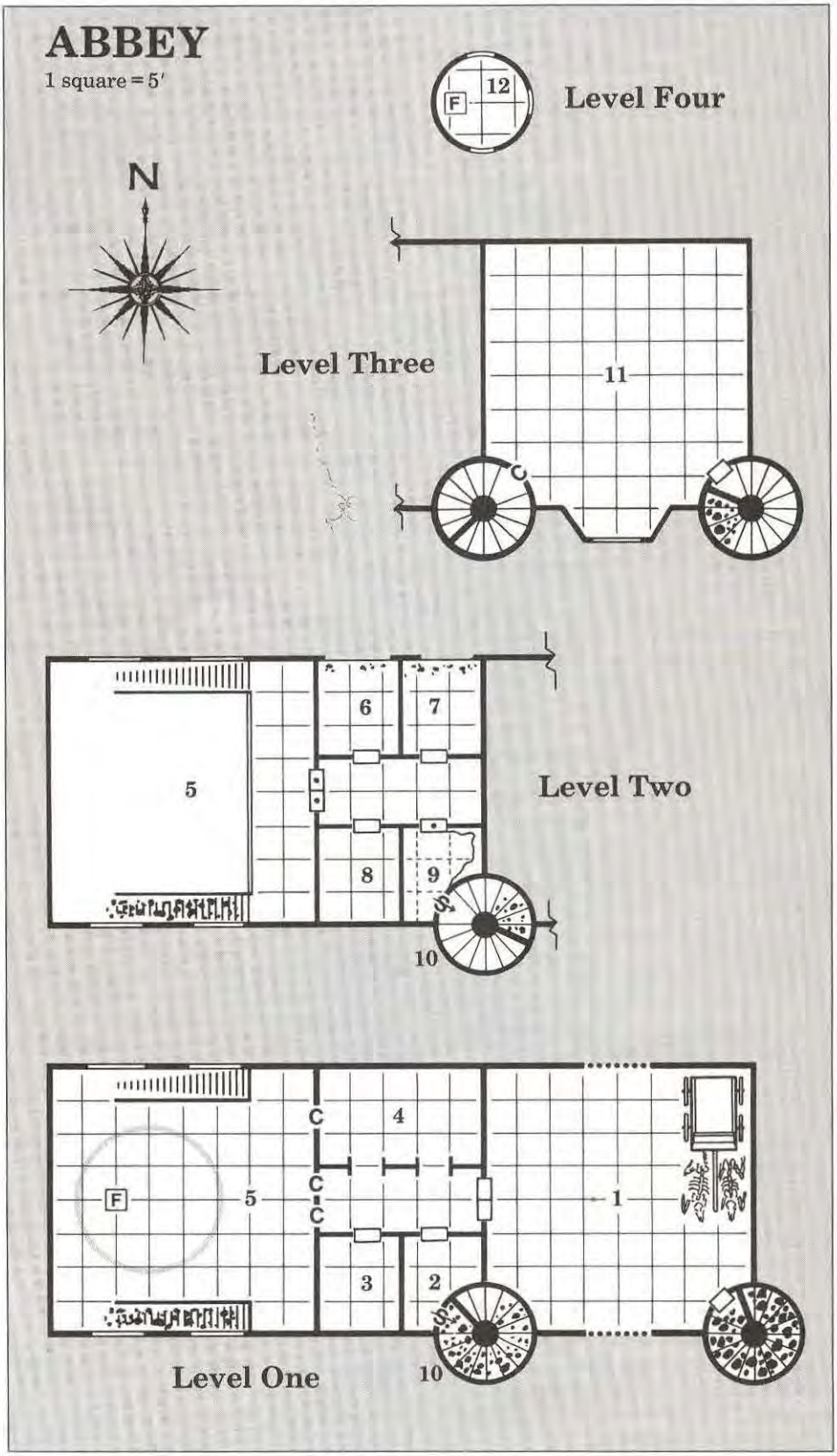
**8. Monastic Cell.** This 10′ × 10′ chamber is nearly identical to rooms 6 and 7 but is intact and shows signs of recent cleaning and habitation. This chamber was used as the temporary living quarters of Julius's apprentice, who was slain by the undead after performing several menial tasks after being subjected to Arandir's *magic jar* ability.

**9. Cell and Tower Entry.** A *wizard locked* (12th level), banded wood door blocks entry to this 10′ × 10′ stone chamber. The floor is almost completely missing, but this fact is concealed by the illusion of an undamaged floor. If the magical *webs* covering the ceiling in room 2 below were previously destroyed, they will have re-formed by the time the adventurers reach this room. Anyone attempting to walk across the floor will dispel the illusion and become entangled in the *webs*.

The tower protrudes into the southeast corner of the room, and a stone door is clearly visible. To reach this door through nonmagical means, the PCs must edge along the only remaining section of floor. This task is difficult for several reasons. First, the strip of floor is just over 1′ wide, lining the north and east walls and ending before the tower door. Second, the floor is incapable of supporting weight greater than one human in chain mail armor; any further burden will cause it to collapse.

The stone tower door is *wizard locked* at the 12th level of experience.

**10. Tower.** Inside the 12′-diameter tower, a 5′-wide staircase winds upward (to Level Three) and downward (to Level One). The stairs leading down are soon blocked by collapsed rubble. The staircase leads 12′ up to the doorway to Julius's workshop (area 11), which is covered by an illusion to make it appear to be as blank as the rest of the tower's interior. The stairway continues upward



another 10' to a landing, above which rests a heavy stone trapdoor blocking Elorianne and Arandir's lair. As evidenced by the rubble-strewn section, the interior stones in this tower are somewhat loose.

After the group has climbed 8' around the stairs, a *magic mouth* spell (from Julius) is triggered, bearing the following message: "Glory not in your success, for it brings unimaginably painful death nearer to you."

**Level Three**

**11. Makeshift Lab.** Behind an illusion-concealed, *wizard locked* (12th level) door sits this 30' × 30' chamber. It is directly above the courtyard and was once used to house the wounded upon whom the clerics of Deneir practiced their healing arts. Now clearly a mage's workshop, it is remarkably intact compared to the rest of the abbey. Strewn about the tables are notes detailing Julius's attempts at restoring the abbey and plans to build a dungeon complex.

Close searching also reveals coded notes on a magical preparation of some sort. Casting a *read magic* spell on the notes enables the reader to determine their true nature. The pages contain details of incomplete research into a spell called *Julius's mystical spell trigger,* the description of which mirrors the activation of the *guards and wards* spell. Julius's great dream was to duplicate the results of his *wish* through standard spell-casting, but this goal proved elusive despite his sacrifice.

A small trapped chest sits in the northwest corner. Springing the trap breaks a vial of poisonous mist, which sprays forth in a 12'-diameter cloud. All within the mist must save vs. poison or die. Inside the chest is Julius's spell book (it contains any spells appropriate for the DM's campaign) and two nonmagical scrolls. The first is an accurate map to the ruins at Myth Drannor, which the party should be happy to receive. The other is a truly dreadful poem entitled "Ode to an Otyugh," Julius's concession to his secret passion for poetry.

**Level Four**

The tower stairs level off to a small landing approximately 5' long. An iron ladder bolted into the wall leads up 10' to a heavy stone trapdoor that contains a unique trap, detailed in area 12.

**12. Undead Lair.** If Elorianne and Arandir have retreated, they wait here to make their last stand, content that the unique trap on the entrance to their lair will finish off any remaining intruders. The trapdoor leading into this chamber appears unremarkable, with only a small stone protrusion 3" in diameter near the right edge. This protrusion appears to be some sort of control button or knob, but is in fact the stopper to the *iron flask* mentioned in "The Abbey Ruins." The *wish* used to seal the flask into the door completely conceals its true nature; this illusion cannot be dispelled by any means short of another *wish.* As mentioned earlier, any attempt to *detect magic* will fail; such is the strength of the overall dweomer covering the abbey.

Any character successfully checking for traps will find a small trip wire that is a further component of the illusion. The wire leads from the edge of the door into the ceiling. Any remove-traps roll appears to successfully remove this snare.

The activation of the trap is simple. Pushing or turning the knob has no result, but anyone pulling on the knob removes the stopper from the flask, releasing the creature trapped within in a blast of fury that knocks the unfortunate adventurer from the ladder onto the landing below (save vs. paralyzation or be stunned for 1-4 rounds). The vaporous form that emerges from the bottle immediately coalesces into a vengeful mezzoloth enraged over its captivity.

**Mezzoloth:** INT low; AL NE; AC −1; MV 15; HD 10+20; hp 99; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6+12/1d6+12 (includes strength bonus); SA spell-like powers (10th level of ability); spells always active: *detect invisibility;* spells usable once per round, one at a time: *alter self, animate dead, cause disease, charm person, improved phantasmal force, produce flame, teleport without error, burning hands, cause serious wounds, darkness 15' radius, detect magic, hold person, mirror image, sleep, trip;* spell usable twice per day: *dispel magic;* spells usable once per day: *cloudkill, flame strike, gate* (40% chance of success for 1-4 other mezzoloths or 1-2 hydroloths, which have a 25% chance of attacking summoner); SD +2 or better weapon to hit; 120' infravision; immune to acid, poison, paralysis, fire, poison, *charm,* and *suggestion* spells; half damage from gas; full damage from cold-based spells and silver weapons (even nonmagical ones); MR 50%; SZ M (7'); ML 13; XP 40,500; MC (Yugoloth, Lesser—Mezzoloth).

The creature attacks first with *flame strike* on the one who opened its bottle, then with *hold person* on as many opponents as it can catch in the spell, repeated as often as necessary to immobilize all foes. If it sees a spellcaster about to hurl a spell, the mezzoloth immediately uses *burning hands* to injure the caster and ruin his spell.

When summoned long ago, the creature was trapped weaponless; it will fight with its hands if pressed in melee (the close quarters on the stairway make group melee extremely difficult). Its primary aim, however, is to return to its home plane, so it will use its *mirror image* and *teleport without error* abilities to escape if the battle turns against it (giving the PCs an imposing and vengeful enemy for possible future adventures). If the party possesses planar-travel capabilities, the offer of a "lift home" can be used by a quick-thinking and resourceful PC as an effective bargaining chip in dealing with this creature.

As soon as the mezzoloth is released, Elorianne and Arandir cautiously monitor the progress of the battle and prepare to mop up whatever the mezzoloth leaves behind. If the creature disappears quickly without taking a toll on the PCs, the undead will await the adventurers in the tower room, attacking the first person to stick his head through the opening.

After the stopper of the *iron flask* is released, the illusion covering the door is dispelled, revealing the true nature of the item. The flask is approximately 8" long and 3" in diameter, and cannot be removed from the trapdoor by physical means. The stopper is a tapered brass plug covered with magical symbols that imprison a summoned creature if the command word ("Within") is spoken. The stone surrounding the flask can be chiseled away from the rest of the trapdoor, but only a *wish* will separate the item from the stone. If the PCs manage this difficult task and discover the command word, the item can be put to other uses.

Actual entry to the room is accomplished by pressing a stone in the left wall opposite the ladder, enabling the PCs to swivel the trapdoor upward to reveal a dark, circular chamber. The

windows of the room were blocked with stone and mortar to prevent even the slightest stream of sunlight from entering. This work was accomplished by Julius's apprentice while possessed by Arandir.

The lair contains the following riches, all of which are displayed openly:

—A mounted human skull, around which rests a thick chain from which hangs an ordinary looking fist-sized green stone. This device is a *greenstone amulet**.

—A small iron box containing a folded piece of leather wrapped around a *wand of polymorphing* (nine charges) and two leather scroll tubes. One tube contains a scroll of *protection from possession,* and the other holds a *cursed* scroll that causes the reader to sprout a second head of opposite alignment. This head babbles continuously, requiring no sleep but preventing its host body from getting any rest whatsoever. The head complains constantly, badgering its owner to perform actions outside of the host's alignment, and is a general pain in the neck. As long as the extra head is in place, the host body has a cumulative 5% chance daily of going insane. The host body also takes damage from physical attacks on the second head. No means short of a *wish* or *limited wish* spell will remove this curse.

—A large pile of skulls, under which rests a large, locked chest containing 3,200 gp, 250 pp, and a bag of 10 100-gp fire opals. Hidden in a secret compartment in the lid of the chest is a shimmering, rib-lined black garment: a *cloak of the bat.*

—A finely wrought hammer mounted on the wall. Appearing to be a magnificent weapon, the extent of the hammer's power will be revealed only to a dwarf, who will recognize it as a *hammer +3, dwarven thrower.* The base of the handle opens to reveal a small carved hollow that holds a minute scroll. Written in dwarvish, the scroll reveals the history of the weapon's manufacture and its name/command word, Gruglat ("Skullbasher"). A *dire charm** spell has been cast on the hammer as a type of curse. Any nondwarf touching the weapon must save vs. spells or attack all creatures indiscriminately for 19 rounds.

—A jewel-encrusted music box that, when played, causes all within 90′ who hear its tune to become obsessed with owning it (save vs. spells to avoid this obsession). The object is worth 1,500 gp to a collector.

—A finely woven but aged tapestry worth 800 gp to the right buyer.

## Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs elect to continue their search for Myth Drannor, they will find Julius's map to be of infinitely greater value than the one they used initially. If the PCs are willing to complete a series of time-consuming restorations, they can fortify the abbey for use as a temporary base of operations for the continuation of their quest.

A detailed description of the terrain surrounding the abbey will be of importance to a cartographer, for the barren landscape is not reflected on generally available maps. If the group delays its quest and returns to a more heavily populated area, this information could prove lucrative. Note, however, that with Elorianne destroyed, the forest will eventually regain a foothold on the area surrounding the abbey. Ω

*Continued from page 49*

up to gain an automatic hit that round as the character barrels into it.

While fighting or moving rapidly, the tracker can be easily seen. Not only does its motion attract attention, but it must compact its mass in order to make any forceful movements, reducing its normally transparent state to one of translucency in the process. Use this opportunity to describe the tracker in all its undulating ickiness. Do your best to make the players feel that their PCs are fighting some horrific B-movie slime creature. Always refer to the slithering tracker in richly descriptive terms ("dripping ooze," "ice-cold slime," etc.) but never by name. Use the monster's ability to make silent, surprise attacks to provoke fright in the PCs and players, creating an atmosphere like that in the movie *Alien.* A horror loses most of its impact the moment it's understood and categorized.

The tracker will make no attempt to actually feast on a victim until all potential opponents have either fled its hunting grounds or been rendered helpless. If the tracker does overcome the entire party, it drains the blood from one victim that night. Slightly before dawn, it takes the time to ooze over all remaining victims, requiring each to make another saving throw vs. paralyzation. Those that fail remain paralyzed for another 12 hours. Those that succeed can make good their escape—along with any paralyzed comrades they carry with them—during daylight, while the tracker is sleeping under the inn.

If any victims are still in the Smiling Spirit come nightfall, the tracker slithers across all of them again, attempting to keep them paralyzed, then drains another character's blood that night. Repeat the process as many times as necessary. If this goes on for more than a few nights due to a particularly bad run of saving throws, you may wish to take pity on the remaining PCs and have a group of NPCs to stop at the Smiling Spirit. Depending on how alert and competent you make the NPCs, they can either rescue the PCs outright or buy them time by providing the tracker a wider selection of foodstuffs.

*Leonard Wilson is an aspiring novelist who finds writing adventure modules the perfect internship: "It pays some bills, gets me bylines, keeps me practicing, and puts a lifetime of role-playing experience to good use. But the best part is, it gives me the last laugh on the teacher who told me I should pay more attention to algebra and less to 'those silly cavern games.' "* Ω

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# MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD

BY WILLIE WALSH

## A martyr to penmanship—or the victim of greed?

Artwork by Dan Frazier

*Willie writes: "No, I'm not doing a series based on proverbs; I've not become Ireland's latest Lotto millionaire; and the rumour from certain editors that I write all my work on wax tablets with a stick is entirely untrue." But Willie, when are you going to get a computer?*

"Mightier Than the Sword" is an AD&D® 2nd Edition scenario designed for a party of no more than six player characters of levels 1-4 (about 15 total levels). Alignments should not be evil and should tend toward law rather than chaos. Set in a large town, this adventure favors criminal investigation over confrontation, but some swordplay and magic may be necessary to survive. As many character classes as possible should be represented in the group to ensure success.

### Adventure Background

Callery Frickard never bargained on all the trouble that plagued him in the town of Bordton. All he wanted was to improve his wares and increase his profits, as any businessman might reasonably be expected to do.

Frickard was a penmaker by trade, with a shop and rooms on Mercantile Street. He did well, buying goose quills from the local poulterers and fashioning them into pens for the many scribes about town: the well-paid clerks of the town's guilds and council, the lowly itinerant letter-writers who served the wider public, and even the occasional mage requiring nonmagical notes in the course of his researches. Callery Frickard was a well-known figure in Bordton, and respected for his craft and skill.

Goose quills, though cheap, have their inherent disadvantages. They tend to scratch and split at inopportune moments, thus turning writing into a laborious art. Frickard had time to think about these problems, and he reasoned that if pens could be made more trustworthy, more people might buy them. Goose quills could be phased out eventually, with the loss of repeat customers negated by the upsurge in first-time buyers.

It was this simple idea that caused so much trouble. Callery Frickard invented a reliable metal pen nib to replace the irritating but traditional goose quill. Shortly thereafter, all hell broke loose in Bordton.

The first to call for the abolition of

Frickard's new invention was the Guild of Scribes, which prophesied mass unemployment and hardship among its members, not to mention a scandalous regression and degeneration of proper penmanship if the commoners took to using letters on a regular basis. The first steps to anarchy, the guild claimed, began with the distribution of Frickard's metal pens.

The Inkmakers' Union, though, was not upset by these claims. Steel nibs, mass-produced and distributed to a wider public, would increase demand for ink. There would be more profits for inkmakers, more taxes for the town council, and, quite possibly, extra jobs in Bordton.

Naturally, the Goose Breeders' Association didn't go along with this view. They believed the Inkmakers' Union was quite rich enough, and besides, it was the breeders who would be the first to suffer if goose quills became a thing of the past. Even the scribes weren't as threatened; they could adopt their writing styles to the new instruments (or, at worst, become social workers). But what about the goose market? Or the egg sellers among the breeders' womenfolk? No! The Callery Frickard pen couldn't be allowed.

The paper manufacturers came out in support of both the Inkmakers' Union and the Callery Frickard steel-nibbed pen. Universal literacy, they proclaimed, was a right of all, especially when paper products had a limited use at present. And the Frickard pen would open up a vast market for the paper manufacturers. At least one man—and maybe a gnome or two—might be needed to take up the extra workload, and didn't the lumber yard look empty these days? The woods could be cleared for paper pulp, the land could be settled, and Bordton could grow to the size of a city! Yes, the metal nib was a great invention, a mark of progress!

The druids of the Dark Wood got wind of this talk and decided a firm "no" was their official line. Deforestation meant a loss of wildlife, and Bordton was already having trouble with loss of topsoil since taking down several acres of trees that had always protected the farmlands from the east wind. What about the loss of land further downstream as the rivers rose? Fewer trees meant floods, calamities, compensation claims from wet villagers, and worse: irate druids. Perhaps (if it wasn't too much trouble) the town should reconsider the use of the Frickard pen.

The town council was divided. In private sessions, it listened to the views expressed and considered its line. Certainly, the employment of scribes by the council cost the town a fair amount of money. Couldn't the redundancy of superfluous scribblers be a good thing for the council coffers? One scribe equipped with a Frickard pen might do the work of five scribes in one day, albeit using a modified writing style.

The taxes of the Goose Breeders would be lost, of course, and the enmity of the druids of the Dark Wood could be dangerous to the well-being of the town in more dramatic ways. What if the druids called up a plague or something? Then again, what about the dangers inherent in an informed populace reading and writing dangerous ideas to each other? Perhaps the issue of Callery Frickard's steel-nibbed pens was not as clear cut as it seemed.

A definite split occurred in town. Those in favor (the pro-Frickards) clashed in the streets with those who were against the idea (the anti-Frickards). Trouble flared further when a protest turned into a riot, and the warehouse of the Inkmakers' Union was broken into and its many jars vandalized. A number of geese were wantonly slaughtered on a farm outside Bordton, while masked men terrorized the landowner and his family. Finally, the crunch came when the unfortunate Callery Frickard was found murdered in his bed, in a room above his Mercantile Street shop.

All faction fighting ceased for a time as both pro- and anti-Frickards began lobbying the town council for action on the killing of the penmaker. A more serious breach of public order was brewing as accusations were rife. The divided council couldn't claim any judicial independence due to its members' many interests in the case. Eventually, the council agreed to ask independent investigators to look into the case and apprehend whoever killed Callery Frickard.

## For the Dungeon Master

The town council's position is in danger of being undermined by the angry factionists, as the uneasy truce is beginning to teach the populace the meaning of cooperation in getting important matters seen to. The fact that any record of Frickard's manufacturing process seems to have disappeared has, apparently, gone unnoticed. At the very least, it's being ignored for the moment.

Under the scrutiny of the lobbyists, the council cannot do a whitewash job on the investigation as they might were the situation not so volatile. Because both pro- and anti-Frickard activists are known to sit on the council, any verdict is bound to be viewed with suspicion by the factions in Bordton. The council is dreading the chaos that will result if one side or the other is shown to be responsible for the murder.

Therefore, the council wants a thorough, impartial, fair, and above all ignorant group of investigators—the better to declare an open verdict and cause as little fuss as possible. Also, the investigators should have no local contacts likely to help them find out the identity of the true killers. Someone like that shouldn't be difficult to hire. Enter the player characters!

What the town council fails to realize is that the killer of Callery Frickard left clues to his identity that the supposedly inexperienced adventurers may discover if they're careful. In most towns, an investigation like this would go fairly smoothly, and the matter would blow over once the culprit was identified. In Bordton, life is never that simple. The heads of almost all the factions sit on the council, and they won't try too hard to help the PCs in their investigation. The adventurers are left with little knowledge of what's going on in Bordton, except for highly partisan gossip. What's more, the killer isn't as obvious as first it seems: he had a motive far different from what everyone assumes.

## For the Player Characters

The PCs may be resting up from a previous adventure or simply on the lookout for work, depending on how the DM has set up the play of this module. They are contacted by letter, delivered to them by a duo of messengers, at their current inn, hostelry, or camp. It's assumed the PCs are not in the precincts of Bordton and have little knowledge of the town prior to the messengers' approach.

The DM may read or paraphrase the following boxed description as an introduction to the scenario:

Daylight brings fine weather and two horsemen dressed in light cloaks over chain mail. They wear long swords sheathed at their sides, and each man carries a leather satchel over his shoulder.

If the PCs are at an inn, the riders dismount and come indoors. They speak quietly with the landlord, who points out the adventurers as likely candidates for a job requiring not too much muscle and a minimum amount of brains. If the PCs are in a camp or elsewhere, the horsemen approach carefully, keeping their hands in view. Once the messengers meet the PCs, continue with the following description:

"Greetings," one of the men says, giving a brief salute. "Would we be right in believing you may be in the market for some employment of an unusual nature?"

The messengers are Gadral and Mimfred, members of opposing factions in the Frickard affair. Gadral wears a goose-quill symbol sewn to the left collar of his cloak, while Mimfred wears the symbol of a pen nib set in a wooden handle, the logo of the pro-Frickard supporters.

They explain that, because of unusual circumstances in the town of Bordton, the council is unable to investigate a crime involving the death of a citizen, and wishes to hire totally independent investigators. If the PCs are interested, Gadral and Mimfred are authorized to deliver them more specific details in the form of two pages (each man carries one page), and then return with them to the town. If the adventurers agree, each messenger hurriedly thrusts forward a scroll, scowling angrily as he competes to have his section of the letter read first.

Gadral's section reads as follows:

*From the Honorable Council of the Town of Bordton, Greetings!*

*It is with great regret and reluctance that we, the representatives of the people of Bordton, have agreed to offer you employment in a matter concerning the well-being of our settlement and possibly the peace and tranquility of all nearby lands.*

*Some days ago, one Callery Frickard (penmaker) was viciously murdered by a person or persons unknown. His death is such a matter of import that it may yet cause a civil disturbance likely to destroy Bordton unless the killer or killers are brought to justice. The town council, in its considered opinion, cannot involve itself directly with the investigation, for fear of wrongful accusations of partiality, and so earnestly entreats your cooperation and assistance at your earliest convenience.*

Mimfred's portion is written in a different hand, and by someone using a radically different writing instrument. The quality and legibility of the text is much improved over Gadral's page. Mimfred's portion reads:

In earnest of our hope that you may help us in our difficulty, a sum of 600 gold pieces is offered for the arrest and proven trial of the killer, or killers, of Callery Frickard. This sum has been equally furnished, at 100 gold pieces per share, by the Guild of Scribes, the Inkmakers' Union, the Bordton Goose Breeders' Association, the town paper manufacturers, the druids of the Dark Wood, and the council of the town of Bordton. In addition, room and board will be provided for the duration of the investigation.

Kindly accompany our trustworthy messengers, Gadral and Mimfred, and the exact details, so far as they are known to us, will be provided to you.

Yours in anticipation of acceptance,

The Town of Bordton

Both portions bear the seal of the town of Bordton: a white goose grazing on a lawn beneath a tree.

The first section of the letter has quite obviously been written by someone adept in the use of a goose quill. The latter section must have been written by someone using a Callery Frickard steel-nibbed pen (as a concession to the Pro-Frickard camp). The pro-Frickards also insisted on sending a member of their faction with the anti-Frickard messenger, each bearing a part of the letter. At this stage, neither side will let the other win at anything.

Both men have been forbidden to discuss details of the case with the PCs, "for fear of coloring the investigators' attitudes." Neither Gadral nor Mimfred will willingly divulge information to the PCs, although judicious use of *charm person* spells might elicit a brief background of the case.

**Gadral:** AL CN; AC 3; MV 12; F1; hp 12; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 16, D 16, C 18, I 13, W 9, Ch 11; ML 13; chain mail, long sword, 8 gp, 3 sp, 3 cp.

**Mimfred:** hp 9; S 15, D 16, C 13, I 13, W 8, Ch 12; ML 12; 5 gp, 6 sp, 12 cp; other statistics as for Gadral.

## Wilderness Crossing

The PCs get a taste of what they can expect in Bordton while crossing the wilderness to the town. Gadral and Mimfred have great difficulty in keeping civil tongues in their heads when it comes to conversation between the duo or when asked about each other. The messengers try to avoid each other whenever they can, but each strives to complete any necessary task ahead of his companion to prove superiority. The adventurers will be either entertained by or extremely fed up with the messengers' antics by the time the party reaches Bordton.

Meanwhile, random encounters (see sidebar) may be used to liven things up along the way. The DM should include the NPCs in all encounters. Neither Gadral nor Mimfred will allow the other to be slain, however, even if this means having to knock his fellow messenger out cold "for his own good."

The town of Bordton should be one or two days' travel from the PCs' starting point is, though shorter or longer traveling times may be used, depending on whether the PCs have mounts or are on foot. DM whim is also a valid reason for changing the travel time.

Rolls are made at dawn and dusk, with an encounter indicated by a result of 1-3 on 1d8. Roll 1d8 again to determine what or whom is encountered, checking the result on the Wilderness Encounters table or choosing deliberately as desired. Each encounter cannot be used more than once, so if a result is duplicated, reroll or choose.

## The Town of Bordton

Assuming the PCs survive their adventures in the wilderness, they reach

## Wilderness Encounters

Roll 1d8

**1.** The party encounters two druids, named Brinwick and Timfil, who are traveling away from Bordton on business for the druids of the Dark Wood. They are affable characters (for druids) and will share any foodstuffs the PCs may offer out of hospitality. Otherwise, they give a noncommittal salute and continue on their way.

If threatened or attacked, the druids defend themselves briefly before trying to reach the cover of the undergrowth edging the road. If Gadral and Mimfred are still with the party, they can advise that enmity of the druids of the Dark Wood is invariably fatal. They're correct. The PCs will begin finding scorpions in their bedclothes shortly after arrival in town if the druids are harmed.

**Brinwick:** AL N; AC 10; MV 12; D1; hp 9; THACO 20; Dmg by spell or weapon type; #AT 1; SD +2 on saving throws vs. fire or electrical attacks; S 16, D 10, C 16, I 15, W 15, Ch 15; ML 10; staff; Spells: *cure light wounds, entangle, pass without trace.*

**Timfil:** AC 9; hp 8; S 17, D 15, C 17, I 16, W 16, Ch 13; ML 11; spear; Spells: *animal friendship, remove fear, pass without trace;* other statistics as for Brinwick.

**2.** The party encounters a family of boars consisting of one male, one female, and four young. If the PCs skirt around them, the piggies will go their own way. If the PCs can't hightail it, the boar and sow will attack. The young are all noisy and noncombative.

**Boar** (male): Int semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 15; HD 3+3; hp 26; THACO 17; AT 1; Dmg 3-12; SZ S; ML 10; XP 175; MC. The boar will fight to −7 hp.

**Boar** (female): HD 3; hp 19; Dmg 2-8; other statistics as above.

**3.** The adventurers encounter a lone merchant driving a covered wagon. His name is Sam Silverstone, and he travels alone because anyone who knows him also knows he fleeces whoever he can. He's on his way to Bordton with a load of ready-made clothing. Given the current mood in the town, the Guild of Tailors is likely to tar and feather him for undercutting their business (if the Goose Breeders' Association will give them any feathers, that is).

Sam is quite content to have the adventurers as traveling companions. When the PCs reach town, however, they might find one or two personal possessions have gone missing.

**Sam Silverstone:** AL CN; AC 6; MV 12; T3; hp 14; THACO 19; AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA surprise backstab does double damage; S 17, D 18, C 15, I 18, W 9, Ch 16; ML 6; PP 55, OL 40, FT 30, MS 45, HS 24, DN 40, CW 75, RL 10; dagger, 15 gp in cash, goods to the value of 350 gp. The horse and wagon are worth 150 gp and 175 gp respectively.

**4.** Harold the hedgehog is snuffling about for earthworms, beetles, and other delicacies when the PCs encounter him. He's none too bright, except when it comes to self-defense, so he curls up into a protective ball if approached. Anyone using a *speak with animals* spell on Harold hears a muffled hedgehog expletive aimed at getting the person to go away and leave him alone. If anyone leaves a saucer of milk in the vicinity, Harold will oblige by drinking it. Otherwise, he does a legger as quickly as he can unless Sam Silverstone is with the party and kidnaps Harold to sell later as a pet.

Harold is firmly neutral on the Frickard question, as long as hedgehog quills aren't being considered as replacements for goose quills. If possible, use this encounter in such a way as to make the players believe it is very important. It isn't, but you might be able to get some amusement out of it.

**Hedgehog:** AL N; AC 8; MV 4; HD 1; hp 4; THACO nil; #AT nil; Dmg nil; ML 5; XP 0; MC (Mammal, small).

**5.** A nasty snake is encountered as the PCs make or break camp, and it's 50% likely to surprise one of the party. The snake attacks in self-defense, or if any person comes within 3'. The DM may judge that one of the PCs has accidentally stepped on the snake, causing it to attack.

**Snake:** Int animal; AL N; AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 13; THACO 19; AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison (+1 on saving throw; onset time 2-12 hours; 2-8 hp damage if save is unsuccessful); SZ S; ML 8; XP 175; MC (Snake).

**6.** Freddy, Neddy, Leddy, and Reddy Pickles are four halfling hunters armed with short bows and short swords. They also carry neat knapsacks containing rations and beer, in quantities most normal humans would bring for a week's journey. The foursome expect to stay out about 24 hours. They have five rabbits between them (Neddy shot two) and hope to bag a turkey before heading for home. The hunters live in a small settlement a few miles off the main road, and none of them knows anything of the troubles in Bordton, having little truck with the town as a rule. However, they respect the druids of the Dark Wood and will follow their wishes if sides have to be taken.

**Halflings** (4): AL LG; AC 10; MV 9; HD 1-6 hp; hp 5, 4, 3, 2; THACO 20; AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA +3 with bow or sling; SD −5 to opponents' surprise roll, considered *invisible* in natural vegetation; SZ Z; ML 10; MC; short sword, short bow, six arrows each.

**7.** The adventurers hear the sudden howling of wolves from each side of the roadway. There is a 50% chance that the sudden noise panics any horses with the party, unless they are being actively calmed by the PCs. If the adventurers look particularly strong or use fire, the wolves merely dog their tracks (pun intended) for a while, then give up and melt away into the undergrowth. Otherwise, they try to pick off stragglers.

**Wolves** (12): Int semi; AL N; AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 15, 14 (×2), 11 (×4), 10, 7, 5 (×2), 9; THACO 19; AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SZ S; ML 10; XP 65; MC.

Use this encounter judiciously. It's better to put the wind up the PCs than eliminate them completely.

**8.** The PCs hear a thrashing in the undergrowth and have two minutes' advance warning that something big and probably nasty is coming toward them. Concealed observation shows a large, ugly ogre crossing the road and disappearing into the brush on the other side. It is dragging a lump of timber behind it (its club) and moaning every few steps. A wide band of cloth circles its jaw and is tied with a knot above the ogre's forehead. He is suffering an acute toothache and is best left alone.

If approached, or if the PCs are in plain view on the road—despite ample warning of his approach—the ogre will vent his bad temper by immediately attacking the nearest character.

**Ogre:** Int low; AL CE; AC 5, MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 21; THACO 17; AT 1; Dmg 1d8+2 with huge club; SA +2 to damage when wielding a weapon; ML 11; XP 175; MC. This particular ogre carries the princely sum of 6 gp on his odorous person.

Bordton and get their first view of the place from one of the approach roads that circle the town (see Town of Bordton map).

The town founders seem to have had defense in mind, as the fitted stone boundary wall is ringed by a wide moat that could hinder many a foe—if it hadn't become the municipal dump of later generations. Twin drawbridges cross the moat from the south and the east, but most of the trench is filled with an accumulation of household rubbish, offal, sewage, and the occasional missing person still unaccounted for by the authorities.

In all, the defensive value of both moat and wall are considerably less than they might be, but the relative peace of the area within five miles of the town means the taxes raised by the council are seldom directed to adding stone to the wall. The council has passed a resolution to provide those living near the stagnant sections of the moat with fresh nose plugs twice a year. In Bordton, this kind of thing passes for civic improvement.

The PCs get to see another example of logical discussion and debate as soon as they pass over the drawbridge to the town (they may enter by either gate). It seems that a mini-riot is in progress.

> Passing over the bridge to the town, you see a group of men and women, some 20' away, engaged in a loud fracas. Though none appear to be armed, boots, fists, teeth, and fingernails are being used to effect, with limbs thrashing about in all directions. A party of militia seems to be having trouble deciding whether or not to intervene.

If Gadral and Mimfred are still with the PCs, they try to lead them around the fight and into the town proper. If not, the DM should judge NPC actions based on what the adventurers do.

If the militiamen remember their civic duty and decide to calm things down peacefully, they attempt to separate the factions. Actually, they'd prefer to hang back and take no action, because they're split evenly between pro- and anti-Frickard camps themselves!

If the PCs join in the brawl, use the *Player's Handbook,* pages 97-98, or the *Dungeon Master's Guide,* pages 59-60, for the rules and effects of punching, wrestling, and overbearing. Even if the PCs join the brawl, the militia may still fail to act unless an adventurer draws a weapon or kills one of the rioters.

**Pro-Frickard rioters** (10): AL CN; AC 10; MV 12; 0-level humans; hp 5 (×2), 4 (×3), 3 (×4), 2; THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2 (fist); ML 6.

**Anti-Frickard rioters** (8): hp 5 (×4), 3, 2, 1 (×2); other statistics as for Pro-Frickard Rioters.

**Militia patrol** (6): AL CN; AC 7; MV 12; F1; hp 7, 4 (×3), 2 (×2); THACO 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; abilities unremarkable; ML 11; AL CN; ring mail, pike.

**1. Drawbridges.** When the town fortifications were first built, these two bridges were equipped with hand-operated cranks. In keeping with the town council's general disregard for security, the bridges haven't been raised in years, and the rotted wooden cranks will break if any pressure is put on them.

**2. The Two-Castles Inn.** This is the hostelry given the contract to house the PCs while they stay in Bordton. Room and board are paid for by the town council, so the PCs needn't worry on that score. However, the landlord, Mern Grundle, points out that any trouble or breakages must be paid for by the adventurers.

Grundle is one of the few dwarves in town. Partly because of his race, he's left much to his own business by the townspeople. He does a good trade at the Two Castles, as travelers coming into town through the east gate naturally come to his door. The dwarf knows what adventurers can be like as guests, hence the warning about breakages.

A pint of ale costs a full copper piece at the Two Castles, and ale consumption is not included with the PCs' free room and board.

**Mern Grundle,** dwarven innkeeper: AL LN; AC 10; MV 9; F1; hp 9; THACO 20; AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (1d6 hp damage with "peacemaker" club, hidden beneath the bar); S 12, D 10, C 13, I 10, W 13, Ch 10; ML 15.

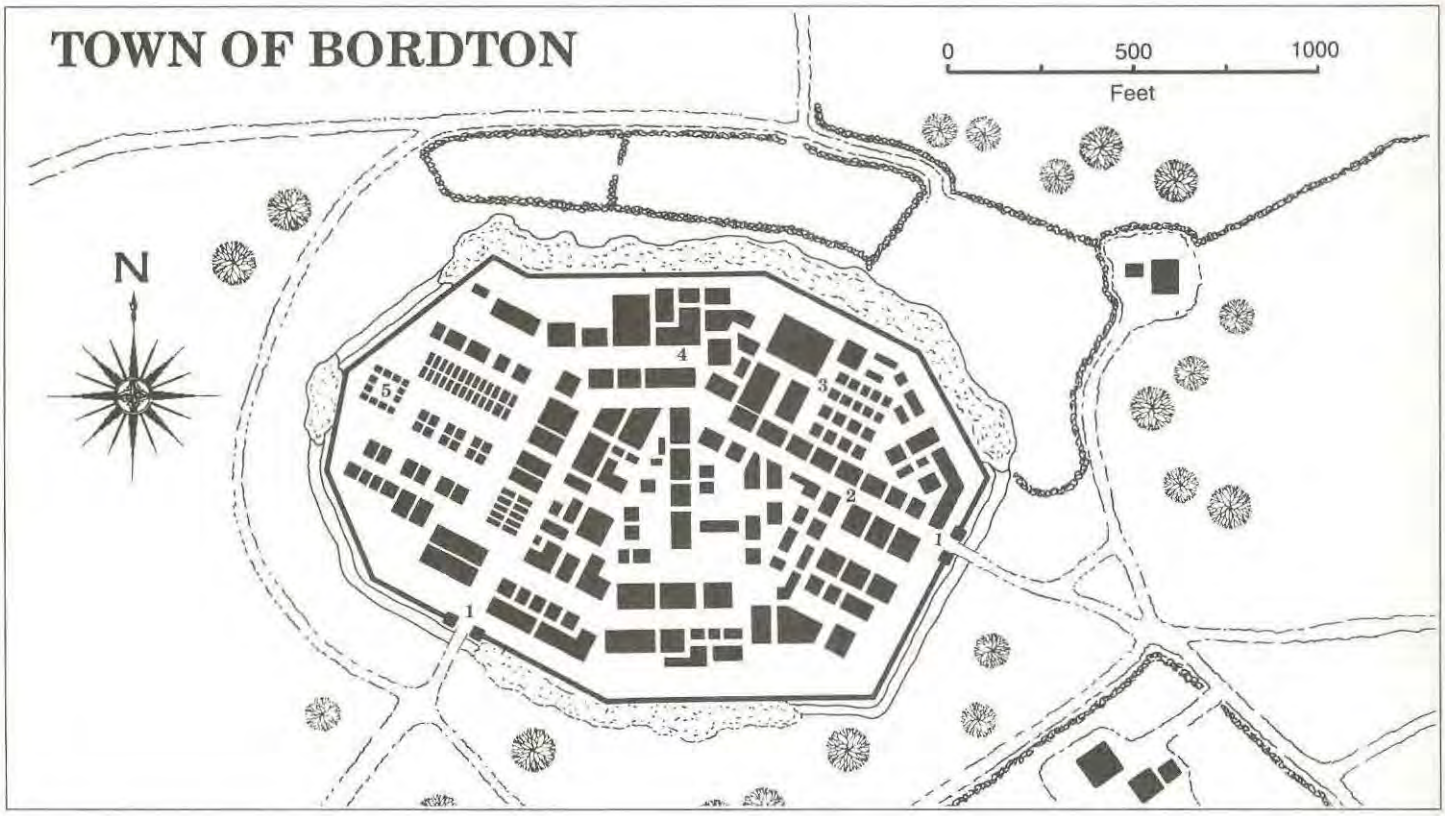
Once the PCs have settled in, both Gadral and Mimfred take their leave to deliver their reports to the council. They bid the PCs wait for their return, when they expect they'll bear another letter from their employers. The adventurers can take this time to ask Mern Grundle about the details of the feuding and the killing of Frickard, but like the messengers, the dwarf knows only as much as stated in the "Adventure Background" section.

When the messengers return, their news is a little discouraging. It's again written in two sections: one pro-Frickard, the other anti-Frickard in writing styles. This is what it says, as a whole:

> *Worthy Adventurers!*
>
> *Thank you for coming to our assistance in our hour of need. It is with embarrassment and chagrin that we must apologize for the spectacle that greeted you on your arrival. But we must also point out the urgency with which you must now fulfill your task. By your own experience, you can see how volatile the situation is in Bordton, and how delicately the search for the killer, or killers, of Callery Frickard must be conducted.*
>
> *But another complication has been added to the problem. A group of citizens, discontent with the hiring of "outsiders" to conduct the investigation, has formed an illegal group calling itself the Committee for Public Recrimination, which hopes to discredit you by solving the murder before you do.* Their ham-fisted way of making enquiries is likely to cause the factions to erupt in even more fighting, and perhaps even destroy the town.
>
> With this added difficulty, we feel it necessary to discourage you from meeting with us officially, as many now see our council—wrongly—as anything but impartial in this investigation. Gadral and Mimfred will remain our messengers, and you may contact the council, as an official body, through them.
>
> We wish you luck in your endeavors.

The letter is again signed by the town council of Bordton and carries their seal. Included with the letter is a large iron key on a wooden tab. Branded into the tab are the words "#3 Mercantile Street."

In distancing themselves from the PCs, the council members hope to further complicate the aventurers' already difficult mission. There is indeed a Committee for Public Recrimination. The councilors feel that, with a bit of luck, the adventurers and the committee will get so tangled up with each other that no one will solve the case and




the matter will eventually die down. At least, that's what they hope.

The key given to the adventurers opens the door to Callery Frickard's shop and home—the scene of the crime, where the council assumes the PCs would like to begin their investigation. The PCs may also spend some time questioning the villagers, in which case the PCs may gain some of the rumors about Callery Frickard (see sidebar).

**3. Callery Frickard's House.** The penmaker's shop is a large, well-appointed building on Mercantile Street. The PCs are accompanied by Gadral and Mimfred as they explore inside, using the key given them by the town council.

Within 10 minutes of the PCs' entering the building, a party of 25 pro-Frickard supporters arrives outside for a wreath-laying ceremony and speeches. This may become important if the PCs rush out the front door or are in pursuit of the people presently climbing a ladder to Frickard's bedroom (area 3G).

**3A. Shop.** This room is a 15′ × 40′ space, with a long counter opposite the front door. A long window of paned glass looks out onto the street. A curtain at one end of the back wall may be parted to reveal the workroom (area 3B) on this floor and stairs leading up to the living room (area 3E). A doorway opposite the window is locked, though the key is still in the lock—on the far side, naturally (see area 3D).

There are many quills and bottles of colored inks on display on the counter, though none of the special Frickard steel-nibbed pens are here. A light coating of dust shows that no one has walked on the floor for a while. A ranger character using his tracking proficiency successfully can tell that it has been 5-8 days since anyone has been here. He'll also notice lines, drawn in yellow chalk, on the floorboards. Otherwise, allow a cumulative 15% chance per character, including NPCs, to discover the marks as the party scuffs about in the dust.

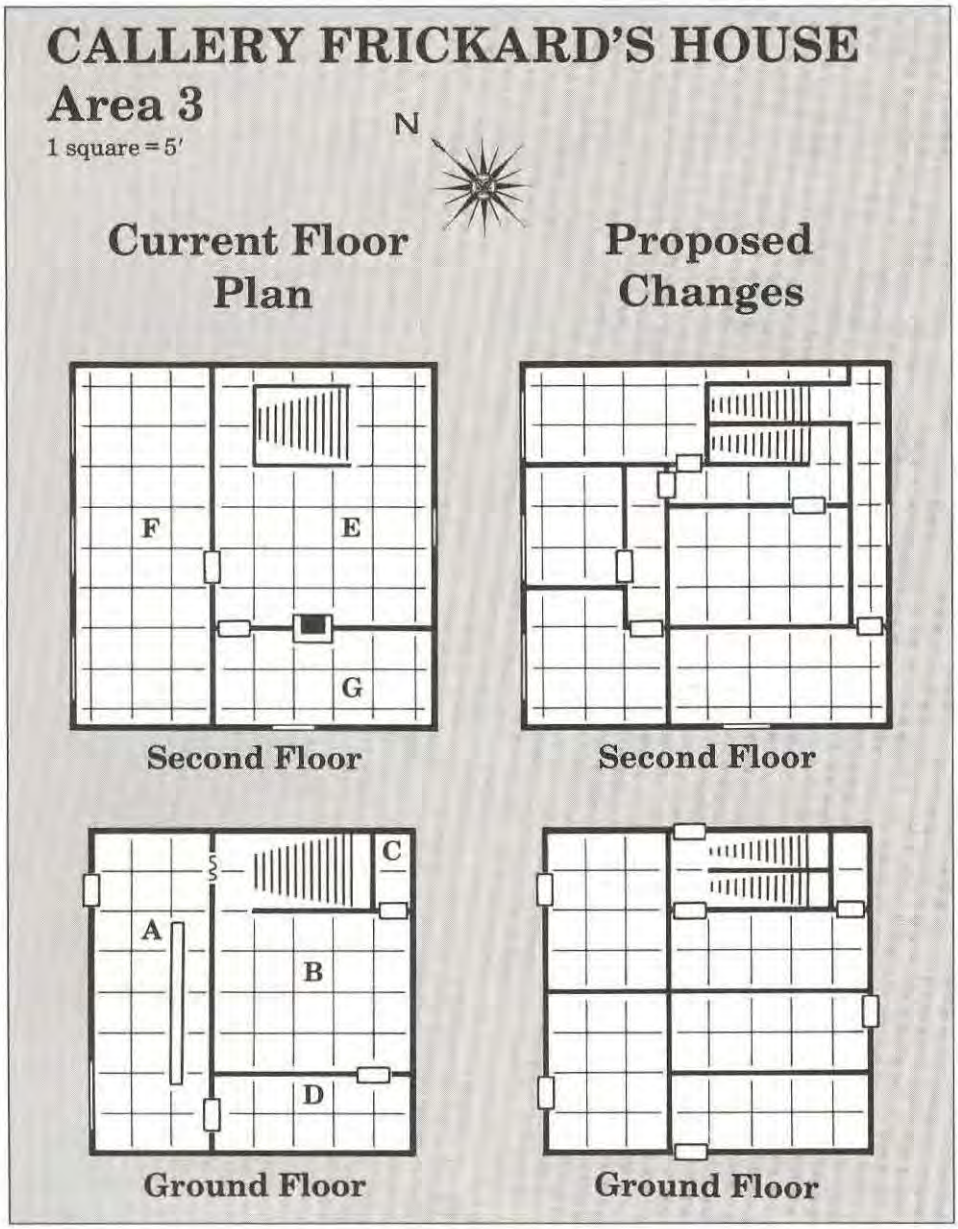
The chalklines on the floor divide the shop into two equal portions, each around 20′ × 15′. The door to area 3D is crossed with a large yellow "X." A line running parallel to the wall is drawn on the floor in front of the curtain. An arrow is drawn, a little right of the window, pointing toward the street.

The "X" on the door to area 3D means that the door will be replaced with a solid portion of wall. The line on the floor outside the curtain means that opening will be bricked up, too. The line that bisects the room, corresponds to a new wall, and the arrow on the floor points to a new door to the street outside.

Anyone with the stonemasonry proficiency or the secondary skill of mason will have no difficulty (no check required, once marks have been noticed) in recognizing the marks as those made by a brand of chalk used by builders and surveyors in marking a site for renovations or fresh construction.

**3B. Workroom.** Beyond the curtain is a wide stairway leading upstairs to area 3E. To the right, on the ground floor, is a spacious workroom. A long, rough-hewn bench rests against the northwest wall. A shorter, more polished worktop is to the southwest. Near the southeastern side of the room is a large pile of sacking. The doors to areas 3C and 3D are closed.

Chances for detecting chalk marks




here are the same as at area 3A unless the PCs expect to find them, in which case they can do so without difficulty. A line runs up the center of the stairs to area 3E, and arrows point toward the opening into the workroom and toward the wall section at the foot of the stairs. A large "X" is drawn on the door to area 3D, with another arrow pointing to the wall southwest. A line bisects the room, northwest to southeast.

Anyone examining the rough-hewn bench discovers a collection of sharp knives and other tools worth 50 gp total. Small pieces of wood have been chipped and scored from the worktop here over a period of years. The smaller bench is smooth and polished, with four large stones sitting on it. Callery used them as paperweights, though not for paper. They weighed down the goose quills that he'd made into pens, as an annoying draft used to blow down the stairs and scatter the quills if they weren't weighted.

The pile of sacks contains a large quantity of feathers and lint, collected from the floor of the workshop. Searching through the contents will uncover some 1" sections of steel piping about a quarter inch in diameter. These are cast-offs from the secret Callery Frickard steel-nibbed-pen-making process.

**3C. Dye Room.** This room contains a number of bottled colored dyes in powder form. When mixed with alcohol, they produce an oily color with which Frickard tinted his goose quills to the customer's demand, or to the demands of fashion (which he largely dictated). The dyes may make black, red, blue, or yellow (singly), or combinations of these colors when mixed. They are nonpoisonous by touch but should be treated as type P poison if injected into the bloodstream, or half the type P effects if ingested. Refer to the *DMG*, page 73-74, for details on poison strength.

**3D. Shopkeeper's Retreat.** Roll percentile dice (d%) for each character entering this room. On a roll of 01-65, the character hears a muffled footfall in the room directly above. See area 3G for details.

A small oil-burning stove in one corner holds a full kettle of water. The stove is cold, and the water is a bit scummy. At the far end of the room are a small table and two chairs. A teacup is upended on a clean saucer, but otherwise the table is bare.

Frickard used this room on tea breaks and when business in the shop was slow. The connecting door to the shop is locked from this side, with the key still in the lock.

On the floor, hidden in the dust, is a chalk arrow pointing southwest. This arrow indicates a planned door into the alleyway.

**Upper Floor** (General): The building widens as the stairs rise to the upper floor. A plethora of chalk marks indicating planned changes are all over the floors and doors. If the PCs have failed to notice the marks before now, they'd need to be blind to miss them here.

**3E. Living Room.** The stairs rise to a wide, spacious room with a fireplace set into the wall to the southwest. Two armchairs flank the fireplace, with a brightly patterned couch between the two. A small cupboard stands beside a window that looks out onto the back alleyway. Two doors lead to areas areas 3F and 3G.

Anyone who looks out the window sees a man at street level who appears entered in the World Nonchalant Stance

Competition. He stands at the end of the building, looking up and down the alley every so often. It's obvious he's on the lookout for someone or something (in fact, he's keeping watch for four members of the Committee for Public Recrimination who entered Frickard's bedroom—area 3G—via the window).

If the PCs rush out the front door to grab this sentry, they'll run smack into the pro-Frickard group, which is 25% likely to jump to the wrong conclusion (the PCs are housebreakers, and probably anti-Frickards to boot) and take the law into their own hands.

If the PCs are creating noise, they've got a 20% chance each of hearing hurried footsteps in area 3G and the sound of someone retreating down a ladder. If, however, the PCs stand still and listen, they may hear (50% chance) activity in area 3G. If the adventurers remain silent and wait here, four people come through the connecting door from area 3G in about five minutes.

The cupboard holds a crystal decanter, six matching glasses, and a quantity of spoiling foodstuffs. The wine in the decanter is worth 5 gp, the decanter is worth 20 gp, and the glasses are worth 2 gp each. Four inexpensive plates and some cheap cutlery complete the contents.

The fireplace is cold and disused. A skillet and some cookware indicate that Frickard used it for cooking as well as heat. The fuel seems to have been wood, judging from the ashes. Only one of the armchairs seems well used; the couch and second armchair still retain their bright patterns.

**3F. Unused Room.** This chamber is bright and airy, but it seems to have been out of use for some time—even before the penmaker was killed. There is no furniture here. Chalk marks on the floor divide this room up into smaller areas.

**3G. Bedroom.** As noted earlier, this room may have some occupants if the PCs are careful to enter it quietly.

This is where the unfortunate penmaker met his end. The room is about 15′ wide and 30′ long, with the back of the chimney from area 3E clearly visible against the northeast wall. A window overlooking the alleyway stands open. (It may also still have the head of a ladder just visible over the sill.)

Callery Frickard's bed is stripped bare of bedclothes, but the bloodstained mattress is intact. A large, roundish stain about 2′ down from the headboard is mute evidence of the violence committed here. There's a 50% chance each that Gadral and Mimford will have to leave the room on seeing this gruesome stain.

A bookcase in the southeast corner of the room holds several tomes on penmaking and the art of calligraphy (total value 60 gp). A rounded stone paperweight, similar to those found in area 3B, holds down bills of sale and receipts for purchases made recently from the Goose Breeders Association. A scrap of paper in Callery Frickard's handwriting holds the cryptic message: "Records 9-12" (it was written using a goose-quill pen).

A loose board under the bed lifts out to reveal an iron strongbox. The box is locked but can be picked normally by a thief, or it can be broken open. Inside are 254 sp in coin—the penmaker's

### Rumors About Frickard

Use the following table if the PCs question the townspeople about Callery Frickard or if they need hints to continue. The adventurers might also ask questions prior to visiting his house. The DM may choose rumors as desired or randomize using 1d10.

**1.** Callery Frickard couldn't stand the idea of confined spaces and spent a good deal of time and energy avoiding them. He'd walk hundreds of yards out of his way to avoid taking a shortcut down a narrow alley, for example. (This is true, and explains the size of his house and rooms at Mercantile Street.)

**2.** He lived frugally and dressed in modest, cheaply bought clothing. However, he did give generously to the poor and seems to have liked his style of living. (True)

**3.** No more than three dozen Callery Frickard steel-nibbed pens are known to have been distributed, and none were found at the penmaker's shop after his death. (True. Frickard carried the secret of their manufacture in his head. He made no more than 40 pens to see how demand would go.)

**4.** Anti-Frickard campaigners killed him to prevent the production of steel-nibbed pens. (Untrue. This is speculation on the part of the pro-Frickards.)

**5.** Pro-Frickard activists killed the penmaker in the hope of shaming the town into posthumously giving official approval to his invention. (False. This is ridiculous speculation on the part of anti-Frickards, who half suspect one of their own may have killed the penmaker).

**6.** The quality of service at the penmaker's shop was deteriorating recently, according to some. He was frequently absent at busy times of the morning. (True. Frickard was visiting the Records Office, which is open between 9:00 A.M. and noon daily; see area 4 for details.)

**7.** Frickard told several of his neighbors that he was going to take up a hobby, as he was feeling lonely in his big house when not involved in penmaking or selling. (True, though nobody remembers hearing what that hobby was going to be. The PCs should eventually learn that Frickard took up genealogy as a pastime.)

**8.** Frickard had no living relatives, as far as anyone knows, though he was a Bordton man born and bred. His father, Barbary Frickard, started the penmaker's shop and left it to Callery in his will. (Mostly true, but Frickard did have one relative living in town, although none of the other townspeople know of this connection. This mention of relatives may get the PCs interested in finding out if anyone would benefit from Frickard's demise, other than the obvious factions.)

**9.** The penmaker was horrified at the town's reaction to his invention and slew himself in remorse. (False. As anyone who saw the body while it was kept in the cool of the Two Castles' cellar can testify, Frickard was shot with a crossbow.)

**10.** Mern Grundle, the dwarven innkeeper at the Two Castles, provided Frickard with the steel for his new pens (False. The dwarf knew the penmaker only in passing while he lived, and obliged the town by storing the corpse in his cellar before the body was cremated.)

takings from his work in the shop over the past few weeks.

But examining the box may have to wait until after the PCs have dealt with the other visitors to the house. Four members of the Committee for Public Recrimination have climbed a ladder from the alley and entered through the window to look for clues themselves (a fifth member is keeping watch at the head of the alley; see area 3E).

Since they don't expect anyone to be in the house, the committee members will be more than a little surprised by the PCs' presence. They favor flight over fight, but the adventurers may be able to grab one in the general rush for the open window. If someone raises a hue and cry, the foursome (and their companion below) will be set upon by the wreath-layers at the front of the house. The pro-Frickards presume that the housebreakers are anti-Frickards who have come to either spoil their ceremony or damage Callery Frickard's house. The PCs may have to wade in to rescue the committee members from the mob's clutches. There's a 25% chance that the adventurers will be mistaken for anti-Frickards themselves and set upon, too!

**Committee Members** (5): AL CN; AC 10; MV 12; HD 0-level humans; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (screwdriver for 1-2 hp, crowbar for 1-4 hp, or clawhammer for 1-3 hp); ML 3.

The housebreakers are Silas Philbin, a scribe who doesn't understand the fuss over the new Frickard pens; Undle Parwicker, a minor member of the Inkmakers' Union who is appalled at the damage done to their warehouse; Karl Geldimple, a goose breeder whose farm was raided and whose geese were slaughtered; and Janet Morellian, a clerk at the paper company who is fearful their warehouse is next on the list to be vandalized. The fifth member of the team is Viverquin, a young man who does menial jobs for the druids of the Dark Wood. Although he disagrees with Janet's profession, he understands the necessity for a measured amount of progress in the world. While he wouldn't take part in an illegal housebreaking, he felt it was acceptable to act as a sentry for the others.

If any of the committee members escape, the PCs may encounter them later when they visit the Records Office. Civic pride urges the committee members to solve the investigation before the PCs.

If the PCs are unfortunate enough to kill one of the housebreakers, the adventurers are branded wanton killers by whatever group (the scribes, goose breeders, paper manufacturers, etc.) the murdered person belonged to. Each group will also deny any affiliation with the outlawed Committee for Public Recrimination. While not given to violent revenge themselves, the various factions refuse to cooperate further in the investigation, and a noticeable increase of sporadic faction fighting follows as protests escalate to include demonstrations against the "foreign murderers."

Each of the committee members carries a written charter of demands, which includes demands for cessation of all hostilities among the factions; a removal of town council officials with membership in factions or interest groups (all the council members!); the opening of the investigation to anyone willing to make inquiries; and the provision of reward money from public funds to encourage witnesses to come forward.

The PCs may come to the (correct) conclusion that this committee has its act together and looks like it knows how to get things done. It's precisely because of this that the council has outlawed the committee—it fears its united front in the face of the factional fighting. However, Gadral and Mimfred insist that, as employees of the council, the PCs are obliged to hand over their prisoners (or their bodies) to the authorities for questioning.

As it happens, the members present acquired no new information before the PCs interrupted them. Even if they had, the committee is mistrustful of "foreigners" and refuses to cooperate, in the belief that locals should tend to local problems. Captured committee members will gleefully point out that no reward will be forthcoming to the adventurers if the Committee for Public Recrimination solves the murder first. This is intended to put pressure on the PCs to wrap up the investigation as quickly as possible (the committee is long on bluster but short on experience in recognizing clues).

If the PCs get embroiled with the pro-Frickard wreath-layers, the DM can assign statistics similar to those of the committee members, except that the wreath-layers are generally unarmed.

**4. The Records Office.** The PCs should have a decent body of information by this point, plus the knowledge they'll not receive a copper if the Committee for Public Recrimination manages to solve the mystery before them. They may wish to visit the Records Office, which is situated in the town council building.

The Records Office is open six days a week, but only between the hours of 9:00 A.M. and noon (by appointment), hence the written clue in Frickard's room: "Records 9-12."

The clerk in charge of the office, George Fillerman, is pleasant but tells the adventurers that another party has already made an appointment to go through the records, so the PCs will have to wait. Obviously, the PCs aren't going to be very happy about this, but George (a lapsed member of the Guild of Scribes, with little interest in the Frickard affair) has his little rules and insists that the PCs must wait their turn. As they may have guessed, the party that booked in advance is a group from the Committee for Public Recrimination, but as they're not doing anything illegal, the PCs have no grounds to arrest them.

The PCs may, however, question Fillerman about this second party's interest in going through the records. They may also ask the clerk questions about the deceased, Callery Frickard. He can tell them that the other party expressed interest in researching the section on wills, leases, and legal documents. George is quite flattered by all this sudden attention. Apart from applying for various certificates, most people avoid a long stay in the Records Office unless they want some not-too-hot gossip from the clerk.

George Fillerman remembers Callery Frickard very well, precisely because he, too, seemed interested in the documents at the office. He came in quite often before his death, researching dilligently in the births, marriages, and deaths section. Fillerman believes he was compiling a record of his family tree as a hobby.

George Fillerman is an inveterate gossip, and if the PCs take advantage of this trait, they can pick up one or more items of information (or misinformation) listed in the sidebar. The DM can divulge as much as he likes or randomize

using 1d10.

As the PCs talk to George, the committee members arrive for their appointment and are ushered into a back room filled with papers, scrolls, and huge tomes on heavy wooden shelves. They leave an hour later, smiling smugly at the PCs (if they've waited around) despite the fact they've found out nothing new. The PCs can research the same areas in the wills section or take a look at the births, marriages, and deaths that interested Frickard. George allows them to carry on their study without interruption. If one of the PCs thinks to ask if Callery Frickard filed a will at the office, Fillerman can confirm he did not.

Likewise, he can look up the lease on #3 Mercantile Street and confirm it was a freehold property (it belonged to Frickard alone). In Bordton, the next-of-kin inherits all the deceased person's property unless a will has been filed naming others as beneficiaries. If no heir comes forward within one year, the property goes to public auction, with the proceeds going to the town treasury.

While researching births, marriages, and deaths, each PC reading through the bulky material may try to roll his Wisdom score or under on 1d20. If he fails, he doesn't notice any material that seems related to the case. If he makes his roll, he is able to piece together various bits of information into the family tree shown in the sidebar (which the DM can give the PCs to examine).

**5. Colton Close.** Donald Coldwater murdered Callery Frickard so he could claim the penmaker's property in Mercantile Street and convert it into a tenement. The chalk marks on the interior are his musings on how best to divide the building into 10 rooms, to take advantage of the council's plans to up the rents to their tenants. As the building is a freehold, Coldwater could charge whatever rents he liked without aproval from the council.

Coldwater is basically a lunatic and is more than a little dangerous, to boot. George Fillerman lists his current address as #1 Colton Close.

Colton Close is an experiment in housing, gone wrong. The designer—the late Councillor Colton—envisaged a tight-knit community setting, where a neighbor's help was just a door away. This might have worked, if Bordton had any covered drains or sewers. The regular street pattern allows for drainage. Colton Close, by contrast, is a septic tank with doors looking into it. The central square traps rubbish and dirty water, making the Close a slum where disease and premature death are commonplace. Only the very dregs of town life live there now, and only because they have no means of escape.

Donald Coldwater lives at #1 Colton Close. He is poverty stricken, insane, armed, and dangerous. He picked up his fighting skills as a mercenary soldier, a profession that left him traumatized and unbalanced. If the PCs stop by to question him, they're in for trouble, because he is inordinately paranoid about strangers and keeps two large dogs to guard his two-room hovel.

Coldwater's family always maintained an interest in genealogy, and he has pinned to the wall an almost identical copy of the family tree researched by the PCs. Instead of approaching Frickard as a long-lost relative (Frickard would soon have discovered Donald's relationship to him, if he'd had some more time to research), the former soldier coveted Frickard's position and modest income. When the steel-nibbed pen was invented, the attention focused on the penmaker infuriated Coldwater. He slew the unfortunate Frickard, then began planning his escape from Colton Close.

With the money he'd earn as landlord of the new tenement on Mercantile Street, he'd buy himself a good house, maybe even building it outside the town walls. It's all a pipe dream, however, as he has no capital to invest in converting the Mercantile Street property. His inheritance is worthless, unless he sells it to someone else.

Coldwater keeps a loaded crossbow in each of his two rooms and will loose a bolt at the first investigator to knock at his door (the barking dogs keep up a racket the whole time). The initial shot is fired through the thin timber of the door, at −5 to hit anyone. This should be sufficient to give the PCs a bad fright, if not kill or injure one of them. Coldwater has two quivers of 12 quarrels near to hand in each room.

If he has time (and if the PCs failed to cover both the back and front door of the house), Coldwater tries to escape out the unguarded door, sending his dogs to attack any pursuers. The adventurers may become entangled in a running

### Fillerman's Gossip

**1.** The council includes the heads of each of the factional interests (except druids, who generally avoid the town) in the Callery Frickard controversy. (True)

**2.** Bordton was so named because nothing exciting ever happens here. (False. The town used to be on the border of the civilized lands, hence "Border-town.")

**3.** The council is responsible for the upkeep of the town but has fallen on hard times recently due to a cash shortage. (True. The rising costs of products make the present system of taxation inadequate.)

**4.** Rumor has it that rents for council tenants are going to increase soon to help the town out of its financial troubles. (True. This is directly related to the reason Callery Frickard was murdered—though not by the council.)

**5.** The council has a tradition of keeping up with all of the townspeople's activities, so it registers all births, marriages, and deaths. (True)

**6.** The council encourages people to fill in the old moat, as several of its members are involved in land sales. (This rumor is false, but it might get the PCs thinking along "property" lines.)

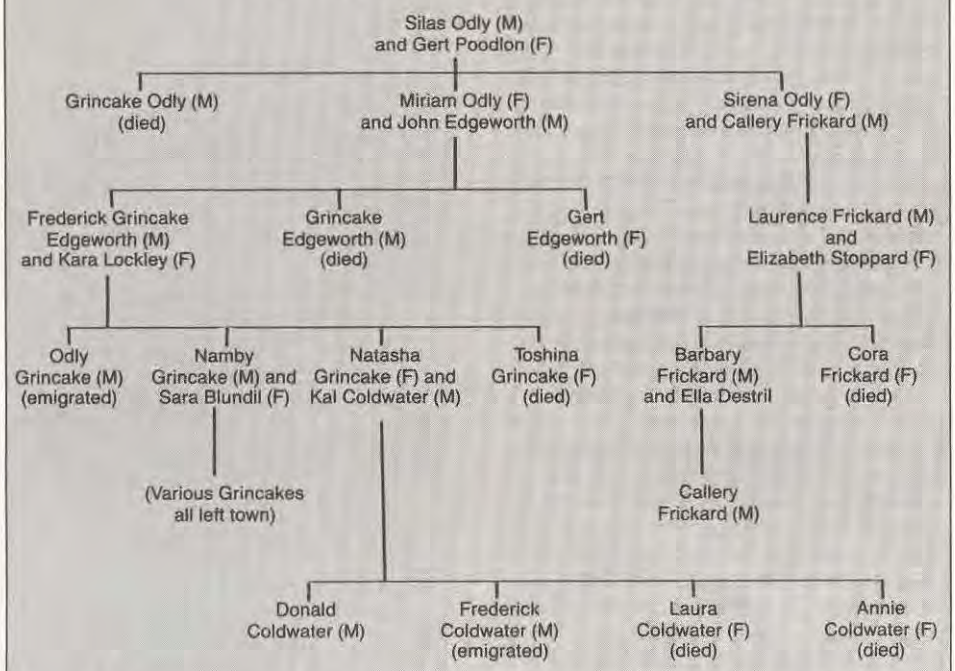
**7.** Seven people serve on the council for a term of four years. As the townspeople elect only one candidate, the other positions are controlled by the guilds. (True. Sometimes the peoples' representative never gets elected at all, or if he does, the power of the guilds makes his position useless.)

**8.** Because of the proposed rent increases to council tenants, townspeople with any spare rooms have been fixing them up in the hope of attracting lodgers who might not be able to afford to pay the increased rents. (True. If the PCs remember the chalk marks at Frickard's place, they may have an important clue to the motive behind the killing.)

**9.** The town council wanted to sweep the murder investigation under the proverbial carpet but were put under pressure by the townspeople to bring the killer or killers to justice. (True)

**10.** The council itself had the penmaker killed, then removed any evidence that might implicate its members. (False)

**Callery Frickard's Family Tree**




The chart above shows that Callery Frickard's parents were Barbary Frickard (father) and Ella Destril (mother). Though his father had a sister named Cora Frickard, she died with no heirs.

Callery's paternal grandparents were the only ones mentioned in the records; his mother's family must have come from outside the area. These grandparents, Laurence Frickard and Elizabeth Stoppard, are shown on the family tree. Laurence, it seems, had no brothers or sisters. There is no record of Elizabeth's family, who lived outside the area.

Callery's great-grandfather was also named Callery Frickard. It seems he was the newcomer this time, as he married a woman of Bordton named Sirena Odly.

Sirena was one of three children of Silas Odly and Gert Poodlon (our Callery Frickard's great, great, grandparents). That's as far back as the records go. Sirena's bother, Grincake Odly, died without heirs. Her sister, Miriam Odly, married John Edgeworth and they had three children: Frederick Grincake Edgeworth, Grincake Edgeworth, and Gert Edgeworth. Unfortunately, both Grincake Edgeworth and Gert Edgeworth died without heirs, but Frederick Grincake Edgeworth lived to marry a lady named Kara Lockley.

Kara and Frederick produced four offspring. Of the two boys, Odly Grincake (who, like the rest of his siblings, mysteriously decided to drop the Edgeworth surname in favor of Grincake) emigrated and was heard of no more. Namby, his brother, married Sara Blundil; their offspring had enough sense to emigrate, en masse. Of the Grincake girls, Natasha stayed in Bordton, marrying a man named Kal Coldwater. Her sister, Toshina, died without heirs.

Natasha and Kal Coldwater lived a long life in which they produced four offspring. Annie and Laura, the girls, died young, while Frederick, showing remarkable insight, emigrated when he was old enough. Only Donald Coldwater remained, and there is no record of his leaving town—nor of his death.

Under current law in Bordton, Donald Coldwater, by sharing great-great-grandparents with Callery Frickard, is the deceased's closest relative. It also makes him the only candidate for inheriting Callery Frickard's estate.

battle through town, where a general alarm will cause the madman to be cornered in some building (possibly with hostages) or in a blind alley from which the PCs will eventually have to extricate him.

Apart from his crossbows, Donald also carries a *dagger +1* for close work and a *long sword +1*, which he's quite skilled in using. Though he usually wears armor and carries a shield when in battle, he has neither when the adventurers call on him.

If captured, Coldwater initially claims to be innocent of any charges the PCs may level against him. However, he changes his mind when confronted with evidence from his own home: the family tree (substantiated by George Fillerman); a rough draft of plans identical to the chalk marks in Callery Frickard's house; builder's chalk; and six of the expensive steel-nibbed pens (prototypes that Frickard hoped to make less expensive) stolen from the shop. He rages on about how Frickard deserved what happened to him; how he unjustly lived in comfort in a house he didn't even make use of properly, while Coldwater "wallowed in filth." These admissions are enough for the authorities to lock him up pending a full trial.

It may be an opportune time for a contingent of six members of the Committee for Public Recrimination to arrive on the scene just as the PCs have Coldwater cornered. Armed with sticks, knives, bottles, and stones, they can help or hinder the PCs as the DM wishes. Alternatively, the adventurers can have all the glory of the final showdown themselves.

**Donald Coldwater:** AL CE; AC 8; MV 12; F3; hp 24; THACO 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 18/42, D 16, C 10, I 13, W 6, Ch 14; XP 175; *long sword +1, dagger +1,* light crossbow, two quivers of 12 crossbow quarrels each.

**War dogs** (2): Int semi; AL N; AC 6; MV 12; HD 2+2; hp 14, 11; THACO 19; AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ M; ML 9; XP 65; MC (Dogs).

## Concluding the Adventure

If Coldwater proves impossible to take alive, the investigators must justify his death to the authorities. The proofs of his connection to the murder, presented and explained to the town council, should be sufficient to convince the members of his guilt.

Given time, the controversy over the Callery Frickard steel-nibbed pen will blow over, though the divisions brought about by the whole affair will be long lasting. The various factions could solidify into two or three opposing political parties that will soon forget the original cause of their enmity.

The PCs, meanwhile, must stay in town until the trial of the murderer, to present their evidence in a proper court. What further adventures might they have while they stay in Bordton?

Well, there is the matter of Sam Silverstone, the "merchant" who may have stolen something valuable from the PCs. Perhaps he gets himself into more trouble, and someone hires the PCs to find him. Or, if he treads on the toes of the local thieves' guild and has to lay low for a while, he may hire the PCs to quietly put something back!

Then there's the case of the gnomish engineer who tries to persuade the council to dig up the streets to lay sewer pipes. What trouble is this going to cause for the hidden secrets buried beneath the town? Will the night-soil removers take this threat lying down? Ω

*Continued from page 6*

variety in our playing.

I am also impressed with the shaded boxes. They are much easier and quicker to use when searching for a specific piece of information.

I have one suggestion: You need to try to publish more solo adventures! But other than that, I love your magazine!

Jose Portell
Platte City, Missouri

## *Out With the Dogs?*

I am a senior at Tulane University in New Orleans. I have found the AD&D game played by those at college level very interesting and often very fast paced, as my PCs seem to have the mental adroitness to outstrip my old modules. Your publication is a gift from the powers that be.

Recently, however, I have begun to feel like a dog that has been tossed out in the street by its owner, since TSR first slowed publishing on the "first edition" AD&D game, and then topped it off by creating the AD&D 2nd Edition game. I consider DUNGEON Magazine my second home, and I'm afraid you'll throw me out as well. The increasing number of modules for MARVEL SUPER HEROES game and the blasphemous creation of the AD&D 2nd Edition game seem to be leaving no room for man's best friend, that beleaguered canine, the DM of "first edition" AD&D games.

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## *Handouts & Flavor*

I read with interest the editorial page in issue #27. The issues seem to be more DM-friendly adventures, more color and flavor, more handouts—in short, make it more fun and easy to use. With that in mind, I have some suggestions.

Handouts: One of the nice things about *In Search of Adventure,* the collection of D&D Basic game low-level adventures, was the placement of all maps in the back so they could be pulled out. The DM could follow the map as he read the text. That saves a lot of page flipping, If the maps and monster stats [in DUNGEON Magazine] were all on one or two pages at the end of the adventure, the DM could photocopy the pages, cut them up, and organize the information as he pleases.

Color and flavor: To that, let me add humor. Like pepper on eggs, there is such a thing as too much. Not every monster needs a personality beyond what the players expect. Personalities for certain monsters are a waste of time and will do nothing to improve the game for the player. Likewise, not every NPC is important to the story, and the DM has more than enough to do. On the other hand, some NPCs should almost come to life. But remember that the players don't read the text. They know nothing about NPC personalities until they interact with them. The PCs can be told that Farmer Brown is a jerk, but if they see him kick his dog, they know he's a jerk. The DM can say that Thorvald the barbarian is a tough fighter, but if the PCs see him kill two trolls in two rounds, by himself, they will know how tough he is.

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